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Illustration : Suzuhito Yasuda

折原  
臨也と、  
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電撃文庫

# A Standing Ovation with Izaya Orihara

by Ryohgo Narita

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Translation Group: [kaedesan721](#)

Epub: [Trollo WN/LN EPUB](#)







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# Prologue

– A certain selected passage of a log from a smart phone.

‘Izaya Orihara? You say you want to meet him? No, I do know him quite a bit, but I did not know his whereabouts. Up until just now, I didn’t know if he was alive or dead, but it seems he’s still kicking.

A wheelchair? Yeah, I guess that’s right since the last time I saw him he was severely injured. Why do you want to meet him?’

(Omitted)

‘Izaya solved a case? Many cases all over Japan? I don’t know what you’re talking about, but isn’t the one behind the black curtain of those cases Izaya himself?

The man Izaya Orihara is not a detective. He’s rather the opposite kind of being.

I don’t mean that he’s the culprit. Certainly when some kind of case happens, he has the ability to solve it if it satisfies his requirements. If he gathers the information needed whether it be a murder case or theft. Actually, in the past he assisted in arresting the culprit for many police cases.

I’m talking about when he was a student he was well guided, although he may have already made connections at that time.

In actuality, whenever some big event occurs, in most cases he would reach the criminal in the end and depending on the circumstances would directly confront them. Yeah, I think it is a feat to have the ability to find the culprit and bring the truth of the situation to light.

But you see, he is far from the detectives that come from hard boiled light novels and serious mysteries. I said he has incredible abilities, but rather than that being knowledge it’s his changing form of mayhem.

First, he does not reason. He does not sort things logically. Furthermore, he

does not have a view of logic. Izaya would easily soak his hands in crimes if it is for his own interest, and depending on the situation he would probably help the criminal run away free.

Yeah, with that meaning, if the answer is he is a criminal that may be fitting. He can mostly accept what happens right in front of him without hesitation. Even if someone tried to shoot his real family in front of him, Izaya would ask the killer with a smiling face, "How do you feel right now?" Almost with an attitude when with an old friend.

Right, just now that was a what-if scenario. His family is still fine. I cannot guarantee it after this. But anyway, he's a fiend.

And so, Izaya Orihara won't do conducts of praise logically, nor will he reason logically either. He will accept what happens in front of him indifferently with an expression like "everything is as I expected." This is when you remember frustration as well as fear towards this person at the same time.

So, he is not a detective that solves crimes. He is a clown who corners criminals and victims.

He would chase them down while blessing them. He wouldn't bear any grudge or anger, but just for his own enjoyment he would chase, and chase, and chase them down...he is a disturbing clown who would watch them fall from a cliff and laugh.

Why a clown? Imagine a clown standing in your room in silence in the middle of the night. Your heart would twitch at that wouldn't it? He's that type of guy who would corner someone like that. If it's someone with determination, they could probably punch that clown fearlessly.....but even that pain Izaya Orihara could accept.

And he would make a face that everything is as he would expect. He would have an expression as though he knew everything.

You better remember this. This is even more so if you plan to cause an incident by his side. He may disclose everything about you. However, that's not because he's not a detective. It's because Izaya Orihara is a villain.

Without choosing any means, he will only have exposed your inner side.

Honestly, I can't give you a recommendation. Well, I don't admire him causing the case itself originally anyway.

Izaya Orihara is not a detective. He is a mad clown in all respects, a jinx who will drag everyone involved into the swamp.

Myself and a roommate of mine, we both went through a fairly unpleasant experience a while back. My roommate was a friend and a classmate of the same grade in middle and high school, but those things don't matter. Whether it means it's good or bad, he doesn't distinguish among humans.

At least remember that.'

プロローグ

ドラフト会議



In the midst of lukewarm humidity of the remaining dregs of summer in the



first week of October, the professional baseball season was entering its final stage, and each stadium was teeming with people's enthusiasm for the game. Ironically, that enthusiasm masked over the beginning event that happened at a certain stadium. Or rather, perhaps the lukewarm corpse left in the pool of blood in an underground warehouse.

In a baseball stadium on the outskirts of a certain prefecture – “Summer Tile” – its official name the “Natsugawara Baseball Stadium,” was a newly made baseball stadium completed not even five years prior. It was a large-scale baseball stadium capable of accommodating forty thousand people including the standing rooms under its automatic opening and closing roof. The baseball stadium was directly administrated by the company of the baseball team the Natsugawara Serpents and was an entertainment business facility expected to be moving a considerable amount of money just by the advertisement income taken from the brand new diamond vision screen.

This day a doubleheader game was taking place, and the Serpent's great slugger Kanshirou Munakata, who managed to hit two home runs at the end of the first match, was drawing attention to how he will play in the second game. In addition to Munakata's home run streak, the team itself was involved in the league championship, and the audience of more than 30,000 people crowded together created an eccentric enthusiasm in the stadium.

“What the hell is this...”

The guard on duty, Michiaki Fudou, stood stock still in the middle of a warehouse underground. At first, he thought it was a lost drunk sleeping there, but the moment he turned his light on it a red pool of blood was reflected and a metallic scent assaulted his senses at about the same time, bringing him back to reality.

“.....”

A corpse.

Without having to search for a pulse, he knew that the flame of life was already extinguished. A knife was embedded deeply into the center of its back. The business suit of the corpse laying face down was all torn up, the blood stains spread across its entire body, making him imagine it was stabbed in the

back numerous times relentlessly.

The first thing to cross Fudou's mind was to naturally report to the police or call for emergency aid.

'But have the baseball players appeared in the stadium?' – The cheers echoing from far away stopped his train of thought.

"First, I have to...contact....."

The guard passing his forties prioritized contacting his superior first rather than reporting to any public organization. He made the decision by himself because he realized it was too heavy of a situation as well as the fact that *he was here*.

Presently, several meters above on the ground, a night game of baseball had just begun. With this being an important game involved with the championship, and the fact that there were sufficiently more than 30,000 spectators crowded up to even the standing rooms, the man who arrived at the position of security officer through flattery and connections with the baseball team managers did not have the nerve to upset the crowd of more than 30,000 people with his one report.

Fudou gave his report to his superior via radio and was ordered to first 'check the pulse to see if it was really dead.' He did not want to touch the corpse, but he did not want to be seen as a man who decided to watch it die in the off chance it was still alive, so he approached *it* while shaking. Prior to this, he also had the reason of not wanting to displease his superior.

From the sensation of his shoes stepping in the pool of blood he felt like throwing up. Pushing the nauseating gastric fluids down his throat desperately, Fudou placed his hand at the nape of *its* neck. No longer feeling any body temperature, he could only feel the same lukewarm temperature and elasticity of the skin hardened like rubber. There was indeed no pulse, finally obtaining positive confirmation that *it* was indeed a corpse. Fudou, having swallowed down the gastric acids with teary eyes, already did not think that it had very much meaning to it.

After reporting that the body in the middle of the pool blood was without a doubt a corpse, he received the order to stay on standby at that spot, and upon

hearing that he had to stay with the body made him stiffen. He turned his gaze from the body and having decided to leave further decisions to his superior, Fudou suddenly realized.

– Wait.

– Does this mean I will be a suspect too?

– This isn't good...my shoes stepped in the blood...

– Would it be better to wipe the footprints and dispose the shoes as well....?

No, if I do something like that poorly, then I will be treated like the culprit by the police –

As he started to think to himself of not being the culprit he made another realization since this was a serious situation.

– The.....culprit?

It was clear to even untrained eyes that this corpse was a murder victim. In other words, the murderer may still be in this room. The reason he did not consider this obvious possibility was because of the shock upon discovering the dead body.

But he realized this just now.

Fudou immediately waved his flashlight left and right, shining a meaningless illumination around without thinking of turning on the warehouse's lights. But no matter how much he looked around the inside of the warehouse, he could not sense anyone's presence. The weapon was still lodged in the back of the body, but he could not disregard the possibility of the culprit possessing another weapon on hand.

Carefully looking further inside the room, Fudou noticed something sticking on the shelf next to the body. A long passage of characters one would think are printed from a computer are on the paper fixed on that steel-made shelf with a magnet.

“.....?”

The moment he fearfully approached it wondering what was written while looking at the body from his peripheral vision, the doors of the warehouse

opened vigorously.

“Aaaah!”

Going completely rigid, he turned around and there were several faces Fudou recognized standing there. Ignoring the shriek from Fudou, the man in the middle of the group around the age of his late twenties or early thirties headed towards the fallen body in the center of the room. Then as he stared at the side of the corpse’s face laid face down, he whispered its proper name.

“Amagi, huh...”

Confirming the body was the completely distorted form of his subordinate, the man frowned slightly.

But that was it.

Without showing any other kind of emotion, the man simply observed the body’s condition with an attitude of indifference. The pair of eyes were as though they were glass beads fitted in a machine puppet that could not feel the humanity more than the body that lost its life.

Watching the man, Fudou muttered with a voice mixed with relief and fear.

“Ex...Executive.....Takioka...”

Ryuusei Takioka.

He took the position of an official said to be even in the top of the baseball team’s operation company and was entrusted with the entire Summer Tile Stadium’s management. While being around the age of thirty, he stood out within one of Japan’s leading conglomerate companies, the Natsugawara group, and his outward appearance possessed a dignity of someone wanting control of everything. In truth he had various titles within even the baseball team company, but he was a man many around him call ‘the executive’ with fear.

At that, a woman’s face appeared from behind Takioka’s back and started to gaze at the body with curious eyes shining in joy.

“My, it is really Amagi-san. Is he dead? He’s dead, right?”

“Tamae, step back.”

Seeing that woman here, Fudou felt a foreboding that this murder incident would become a serious matter.

Tamae Takioka was Ryuusei's younger sister, and a woman working as his secretary. However, Fudou knows she was a central figure of the intelligence supervision department collecting all personal information from the members of the baseball team company to the players of the team. In another sense, she was a 'woman you must not make an enemy of' more than the executive Ryuusei, but at the fact that she came to this place where the body was made Fudou feel a sense of impending danger that overcame his sense of discomfort.

This did not seem to be just a murder case. And in actuality, Fudou also had many ideas about the possibility of it not being a normal murder case.

"Fudou, the reason why you came here was to pick *that* up, right?"

Fudou came to his senses and nodded his head vigorously.

"Y-yes."

"Is that so. Then the vital *that* is safe?"

"Ah..."

Fudou rushed into the center of the warehouse in haste. After commanding his subordinates behind him to stand by, Ryuusei slowly glared around the inside of the warehouse.

"It has gotten interesting, hasn't it, nii-san. For a murder to happen in the middle of your *theater*."

Hearing his sister snickering at him, Takioka answered while squaring his shoulders.

"Whether an incident happens or not is something I decide. Depending on the situation, I'll have you put to work too."

As he said that, he noticed the paper pinned to the shelf, approached it while avoiding the blood and reached a hand out towards it. And then seeing what was written, he snorted.

"I see. How amusing."

“Amusing?”

One subordinate behind him frowned, so Takioka summarized what was written on the paper with a smile like a child trampling on an insect.

“It seems we were threatened.”

“Threatened...?”

“If I cannot accept the request, it seems people will die during the game at the stadium hereafter. It isn’t stated which game it is, but if the culprit figured out that we found the body, then it’s possible it will be this game.”

“Wha.....”

Takioka did not bring up the details of the request. And seeing Takioka’s attitude, his subordinates kept their mouths shut. Only Tamae asked her brother with a snicker.

“Then is this the work of a professional? Or is it the work of an amateur who learned of *that* by chance?”

She squinted a little and added with a voluptuous smile.

“Or.....is it the work of a traitor among us?”

“It doesn’t matter which. When you look at the place he politely warned us of, he would probably plan for half of the game too.”

“A warning?”

“Both of the team’s benches and bull pens, the VIP seat, the wheelchair zone and the stroller zone, the network’s special seats. The camera seats for the journalists. And my executive office... Haha, it seems from here on out it will be chosen randomly. Wherever a body is found, it will not be conspicuously hidden. Aside from my office.”

After shrugging his shoulders with self-derision, Ryuusei faced back towards his sister.

“There is a possibility the culprit is somewhere in those notified places. Can you bring up the footage of those areas?”

“Alright, just wait a bit.”



Tamae operated her tablet. She received the data conducting the original cipher processing from the independent server in the stadium, and the footage from the hidden cameras were shown on her tablet.

“.....Have the number of cameras increased?”

“There still isn’t enough. I prepared them so normal visitors cannot find them, so don’t worry.”

The hidden camera footage covered everything in the baseball stadium from the guest seats to the passageways. Among those, the footage showed the previously mentioned VIP seat and special seats and even both the benches for the teams in the midst of the game.

At that point, Fudou came back.

“Executive, it was safe. There were no traces of it being open or the vault itself being found. I checked the inside of it too, and it was safe.”

“Is that so. If that’s the case, then the reason why Amagi died is because he was killed at the end of his torture since he did not know its safekeeping or how to open the safe for *that*....perhaps.”

Nodding his head in understanding, Ryuusei asked Tamae again.

“Yeah, sorry about this while you’re working, Tamae. But are there any bugs or hidden cameras installed here?”

“I checked them all up until here, but the cameras we installed changed to just still images. The route from the third exit of the stadium to this warehouse is completely messed up. So really, is it a professional’s work?”

“Yeah, don’t think so. I don’t mean just the cameras we set up, but if the culprit also put one of his own in.”

“Wait a minute.”

Tamae pointed to the subordinates behind them and indicated for them to check the room with the personal tools. She answered after working for a few minutes.

“...Yeah. It seems like it. At least, I can’t locate any electromagnetic waves dispatching from here to outside.”

“Is that so. Then that’s good.”

Ryuusei put on a triumphant smile, and from there he slowly approached Amagi’s corpse and –

drove in a kick with the tip of his shoe into the face of his dead subordinate.

“Hee....”

Fudou thoughtlessly cried out but almost immediately held back the sound from his throat. Tamae gazed at her brother’s atrocity with a large grin, and the other subordinates watched the executive repeatedly kick the body several times over with varying expressions, but not one person tried to stop him.

“What the hell were you doing....Amagii...! You worthless bitch!”

Ryuusei relentless drove in more kicks as he raised his voice.

“For dirtying! My theater! My stage! With your fresh blood!”

The same time he cut off his words he delivered another kick and continued to warp the dead body’s face more even though it should be impossible to do so. Then, he trampled on his face with his blood stained shoe and crushed his temple like extinguishing the flame of a cigarette as his voice resonated with utter resentment.

“Couldn’t you have at least simultaneous killed each other? How about leaving just one clue by gouging out a piece of his flesh! Or at least running away to a place safe from the cameras before receiving the final blow!”

A few minutes later.

The body was lying down in the middle of the room, its arms and legs irregularly bent in different directions, and its face no longer having any trace to its original form. The knife that was embedded in its back had fallen out already, and it turned into some cruel situation that would be mistaken as someone beaten to death rather than stabbed to death or run over repeatedly by a car as seen by an outsider.

Ryuusei asked Tamae indifferently as he wiped the blood from the underside of his shoes with a handkerchief.

“How is it? Is there someone we know?”

“Hiura-san came as tonight’s *special guest* in the VIP seat. The rest...are several entertainers who came incognito in the box seats. That’s about it. The one that stands out is -”

“How is the game?”

“It just started. The first hit came from the lead-off man, so if there is no double play it will be Munakata’s turn at the bat soon.”

Ryuusei talked about the progress of the baseball game with his sister with a composed expression. Seeing him like that Fudou instantly forgot the fear that *there was a dead body here*. Ryuusei looked down at the deformed body of Amagi with a pitiful look that was the complete opposite from several minutes before.

“Even so, how terrible...What was Amagi even doing. In such a pitiful state, we won’t be able to show him to his family.”

As if he commanded the intention behind those words, several men waiting around the vicinity of the entrance came in. They appeared to be cleaners of a fashion, and the men completely dressed in waterproof garments like rubber gloves and long boots surrounded the body.

“Handle the body with care. Although he is dead, don’t forget your respects. The moment you forget respect people become monsters. I’ll never forgive anything like that.”

“Alright, Nii-san. Leave the rest to us.”

Hearing his sister in an agreement with him, Ryuusei shrugged his shoulders and continued.

“It turned into a sad outcome, but shouldn’t we at least pray for Amagi’s happiness in the next world? Munakata’s home run today is surely the condolence for Amagi-kun. He was a wonderful subordinate. He really devoted himself for us.”

“Y-yeah.”

Fudou desperately tried to not show any emotion, although shaken to the core internally, and nodded. Ryuusei gave him a gentle smile.

“I won’t forgive the person who did that to Amagi-kun. We have to catch him no matter what. For Amagi-kun’s sake...That’s right! It’s also for Amagi-kun’s sake! You think so too, right? Fudou-kun.”

“Y-yes.”

Guessing on the meaning of the man’s words, Fudou felt he reached a point he could not return from. The silent cleaning of the body behind him indicated that they had no intention of getting the police involved on the case. And Fudou was a person on the side who understood why the police could not get involved.

“If he is planning to continue incidents during this game, the suspect may be among the 35,000 people in the stadium right now. No, there are still people coming in. In the end, there may be a possibility of more than 40,000 people. And that someone is a murderer who will kill without hesitation.”

“.....”

“At the same time, it means that the people who could become victims could surpass 30,000. It is impossible to guard every single person. It’s almost like it’s a draft conference. You have to decide who to protect by predicting who your opponent will designate.”

Ryuusei placed a hand on Fudou’s shoulder, who was turning more pale than when he found the body at the mention of the numbers, and dug his finger in roughly with a smile on his face.

“It’s alright. No matter if it’s 30,000 people or four people, as long as it is in this stadium everyone is just dressed up presenters on my stage. They cannot go against the director, nor will they.”

After proclaiming such arrogant words that look down on both presenters and audience members alike, the man playing the role of director spread open his hands with a smile of pure killing intent.

“That’s right! Everything is a show! It’s not something difficult to think about. This stadium is the space for dreams separated from society! It is a dream itself! It has to be! Isn’t that right?”

“...Y-yes, that’s right!”

“Which are you? Michiaki Fudou. Are you a puppet manipulated on the stage without understanding its meaning? Or are you a human ‘on this side’ who pulls the strings from above under my directions?”

“Of course I am move according to your motives, a-a person who pulls the strings!”

Not understanding what half of the man was saying, Fudou shouted this due to the overpowering influence emitted from the man. Perhaps hearing his words made him relieved. Ryuusei nodded deeply and patted Fudou’s back thoroughly.

“Amazing. You are the best staff. You are not an actor who moves strictly based off the script. You are an existence capable of looking down on the stage from such heights.”

“Th-thank you.”

“I’ll put you in the third investigative division.”

“.....!”

The third investigative division.

The moment he heard the term, Fudou lost all color to his face.

It was because he knew. That the unofficial division was responsible for all the dirty work in the darkest sides of this stadium. They usually concealed themselves as workers in every division from janitors to beer sales vendors, but they were professional killers who move according to Ryuusei’s orders in emergency situations.

Fudou understood what Ryuusei desired, realizing the implications of working with such a group. He was saying to catch the culprit and kill him under Fudou’s hand.

“We should remind them, shouldn’t we? The stupidity of picking a fight with us in this *theater*.”

The curtains for the case silently opened like this. With the audience of more than 30,000 people not realizing the beginning of a tragedy. Anyone could be the culprit. An impure air settled around Ryuusei and his group who were the

intended victims of this case. However, the wounds on the corpse showed their lack of sportsmanship.

At this point the Natsugawara baseball stadium would change to a pandemonium mixed with the rotten smell of desire.

However, they did not know.

Not the executive who put on airs for the theater, nor the murderer who caused the incident. That in the 'theater' Summer Tile which became the stage of a tragedy there was one *irregularity* who was neither a stage actor or a performer but a simple guest in one regard mixed up with the event.

"Hmmm...there are plenty of people in the wheelchair space.....What's this?"

"What's wrong?"

"Ah, it's nothing. It's just there seems to be a rather wealthy person that came."

"Wealthy?"

Ryuusei knitted his brows in confusion, peaked at the monitor screen and saw a man on it. The man, despite being across the monitor, was clad in a ominous presence. He had glossy black hair and black clothes. The eyes on his arranged face shone with an intellectual glow yet he could not grasp what he was thinking.

– What is this man watching?

Ryuusei, while rotten, was the administrator of the baseball stadium. He understood immediately that the young man was not watching the game. But he could not fathom what it was he was watching from the monitor screen. If there was any specialty to note it was that he was sitting in a wheelchair along the personal use space, and there was a butler-like elderly man standing next to him keeping an eye on the area around them more than the game itself.

– Is this old man...some kind of professional?

Ryuusei came to the impression that the man was not your run-of-the-mill guy, but Tamae was focused on a completely different aspect.

"The wheelchair that man is in is a new electrical model made from a carbon-



fiber material. It's the best product made by a foreign producer, so I think the price is roughly more than 3,000,000 yen. The person next to him seems to be a butler rather than family, so he may be some rich person's kid."

"Well now...If he is from a wealthy family, then we should have him watch from the VIP seat inside next time."

Ryuusei gained a little bit of interest in the man, so thinking there was no need to fuss in a situation without positive proof he turned his gaze away from the man projected on the tablet screen. The screen quickly changed to another footage from the hidden cameras, and the man in the wheelchair was temporarily left as one piece of information out of the 40,000 people in the back of his mind.

Without realizing that *him* being here in this baseball stadium was the worst coincidence to the people concerned in the case.

### **Translation Notes:**

1. The term used in the very first line, 上旬, refers to the first ten days of a month. We do not have a specific term in English like this, so the translation is more generalized as "the first week of October."
2. The price of the wheelchair was not converted from yen value as I am uncertain exactly when this story is taken place. Perhaps late 2000s and early 2010s.

# 一章

ホームラン



# Chapter 1: Home Run

“Nec-chan, you don’t use a tablet?”

The man in black sitting in a wheelchair – Izaya Orihara – addressed the woman a little ways from him. Sitting in the pipe chair resigned for family of the wheelchair user while skillfully typing away on the laptop positioned on her knees, the girl – Nec – did not move to face Izaya and answered with just barely enough volume to speak over the cheers that were going on around them.

“It’ll leave fingerprints, so I don’t really like touching the screen directly. It’s fine if it’s a smart phone.”

She had gothic-lolita punk makeup on her face along with glasses and cross chain ear piercings which dangled from both of her ears. Her clothes were primarily black with red trims, and even the laptop she used had various disturbing stickers depicting skulls and zombies.

“My, you’re surprisingly old fashioned, huh, Nec-chan. Well even if I say that, to Sozoro-san laptops and tablets must seem like alien tools though.”

At that, the butler-like elderly man – Densuke Sozoro – shrugged his shoulders with his hands remaining behind his back.

“This is an underestimation. A long time ago, I also have used a home computer.”

“A home computer....”

The same time Izaya shook his head in exasperation, there was a large uproar in the stadium. Izaya’s skin trembled from the eruption of joyous voices, as though an electric current ran through him, and he continued to yield himself to the roaring sound with a gentle expression without knowing why. As a result, he came to know the reason for the cheering only several seconds later.

“Well, would you look at that.”

While the crowd around them stood up and gave a surprisingly pleasant, boisterous dance, the young man in the wheelchair moved his gaze to the person responsible for the applause with a gentle expression. In his line of sight

the man running nimbly, Kanshirou Munakata, was had just hit the home run. He managed a third consecutive home run continuing on from the previous game, and the man raised his hand to answer the crowd's cheering for accomplishing such a brilliant feat with a humble expression as he made a lap around the diamond.

"Really, I'm so glad I came. Being able to see this many people shower another with a standing ovation is not something you can see often."

"Is that the case?"

"If I can say my own personal selfish desire, I would like to see both the triumphant batter's expression and the beaten pitcher's expression compared on the diamond vision screen."

"You really do have terrible tastes. A player's grief is not amusement."

Sozoro said to him in rejection, but Izaya shrugged his shoulders on top of his wheelchair.

"It is amusing. Think about it. If it was a sport where both the winner and the loser played expressionlessly, do you really think the audience would be so crazy about it? The word *kandou* means that emotions move. Is wanting to savor the intense emotions of the players really that unnatural?"

"I will not deny that the players' feelings are part of the seasoning. But I think for you to want that to eat as the main ingredient is a really bad taste. Besides, you do not hold any interest in baseball itself."

"How rude. Catching the young me who was once a healthy baseball boy and say such a thing."

"Do you know which side of the batter's box a right-handed person would stand in?"

"Eh?"

For a moment Izaya's smile vanished from his face, and he thought deeply as his hands gripped an invisible, imaginary bat.

"What is this? Are you not left-handed? Or perhaps you do not know how to hold the bat...?"

“.....That’s not it. I don’t really know what you’re talking about.”

“For the record, right-or left-handedness is not the only factor to determine if one stands in the right or left side of the batter’s box. With the reason of getting close to first base, there are many players to choose for the batter’s box regardless of their dominant hand.”

“...Of course I knew that. I really like the obsession for victory to correct the right-handed batter just to get close to the first base.”

His previous smile returned, and Izaya answered as though everything was as expected.

After he replied with “my apologizes,” Sozoro added on.

“If I can say more, the right-handed and left-handed batters are seen by the pitcher as on the left and right, so the one closer to first base is the left-handed batter.”

“ .... ”

Seeing Izaya’s frozen smile, Sozoro slowly shook his head left and right and let out a sigh.

“Truly. While you brag about being an ‘informant,’ depending on the conversation you can be quite ignorant.”

“I can’t help that. I’m not some quiz king who needs almighty knowledge. I’m just an informant. Being impartial to the knowledge people seek is normal.”

“I cannot fathom that from someone who just made a huge lie saying, ‘of course I knew that,’ so proudly just now.”

Izaya looked away from Sozoro as though to deceive him after mercilessly pointing out his mistake and began to talk to Nec.

“How is it? Are you having fun Nec-chan? It seems that Haruto-kun and Himari-chan are enjoying themselves.”

A little ways from them in the unreserved seats, a boy around elementary school age jumped around in glee seeing Munakata’s home run. The young girl around the same age as the boy stood next to him with a cold expression, but she slowly applauded for the Serpent’s Munakata.

“I don’t have any interest in baseball, but since baseball stadiums have a lot of electromagnetic waves flying about I like it. This stadium is especially impressive. It’s almost like it’s the stronghold of electromagnetic waves.”

Nec pulled up a rather shifty software on her laptop, and while she typed on her keyboard she grabbed a small, wireless device from under her seat.

“Really now, how about you watch the game a bit? I brought you all the way here.”

“Says the ‘president’ who only looks at people’s faces rather than the game... right?”

How Izaya Orihara was able to come and watch this game was nothing more than coincidence. He was told by a client in exchange for the price of information, ‘I can obtain stadium passes for a baseball stadium in the area,’ so he thought he could enjoy a day off by immersing himself in a crowd of people.

But as Sozoro and Nec understood from the conversation, this man who called himself an ‘informant’ truthfully had no interest in the game itself. Why he came to enjoy himself in the wheelchair reserved seats of the stadium was for the massive crowd of more than 30,000 people.

In other words, it was because of humans. Similar to how people would take peaceful walks through the woods at a mountain side with few people when they tire from the city, Izaya decided to visit a baseball stadium teeming with people.

He started by asking the elementary kids he used for errands if they wanted to come with him. Although he asked every person who came with him for a certain job in the Kanto region, the only other individuals who tagged along besides Haruto and Himari were his data processor Nec and his bodyguard Sozoro.

“It would’ve been great if Fujiura-san came too.”

“He was just discharged. It was also said that he gets sick in the crowd.”

Izaya Orihara was an informant. However, he was not someone who earned his income by giving Intel to the yakuza like one would usually imagine. He was an information gathering agent who provided desired material. However, he



frequently collected information through completely different means from so-called detectives.

Depending on the situation he would use Nec to fish for information through illegal tactics, and in other situations he had gained information directly from crimes. And to carry out those operations smoothly, Izaya Orihara has hired people. To broaden the world's vision wider, to gather stronger information, to grasp and expose truths hidden in deep places.

And so for that he gathers former and active criminals around him frequently. But whether because there was not much popularity for it, surprisingly enough there was no one who would gather for such events like watching a baseball game or having a hot pot party.

That said, having four people accompanying him can be called rare, so it seems like a good number.

"I wonder if I should have called Lisa-chan too. Surely if she were to see this crowd, she would want to burn them all. I think that would have been a bit dangerous, but I somewhat want to hear the cries of the people trying to escape and to hear the joyous voices from the people that manage to return alive."

"If you try that, at that point I will let you hear it. The sound of your tibia snapping."

"That doesn't seem like a very pleasant sound."

In the middle of that conversation, Nec exclaimed in glee.

"Got it. I did it! I'm in! Hee hee."

"?"

Nec continued while sparing Izaya a glance.

"You can't look too long. We'll get caught."

"What is it?"

"You see, this baseball stadium, I thought I saw a strange wireless server here. When I looked into it, I was surprised. This stadium not only has the normal hidden cameras, but there are wireless hidden cameras moving around too. I

found the camera watching these seats as well. If the lens moves we'll be caught, so I can't tell you where it is."

Izaya smiled slightly at the information Nec provided nonchalantly as if he learned some interesting fact.

"Nec-chan, you solved the encryption for the wireless hidden cameras?"

"I thought I would try, but it was a bit much for the laptop I have. But, I found a tablet connected to the personal network, and from there I messed with it a bit and made the encryption meaningless. Hee hee!"

Hearing Nec's words with a crooked smile on her beautifully arranged face, Sozoro nodded in understanding expressionlessly from behind them.

"I see. As expected of you Miss Nec."

"Sozoro-san, you don't have to overdo it. It's more cute behaving like an old man and ask in confusion, 'what foreign language are you speaking in?' for things like that, you know?"

Izaya said teasingly, recalling the previous conversation.

"However, Miss Nec. You managed to break through the wireless security well. You got the stadium's hidden cameras...and furthermore, with all due respect, you may have spoils connected with those hidden devices. It is not like you are continuing to use a rudimentary encryption like WPS, correct? If circumstances are met, could there be the possibility of utilizing the independent encryption as consequently as the isolated network?"

"Now, it's not like I'm cracking down on all the hidden cameras in Japan here for show. If you give me the preparation and time, I can sneak into the hidden cameras of the prime minister's official residence or the American military bases."

"..."

Seeing how Sozoro had started a conversation with Nec with complete understanding, Izaya was bewildered for a short time.

"Um, Sozoro-san?"

"What is it?"

“Weren’t you bad with computers?”

“I believe I have said that I have used a home computer before? Well, it is certain that I cannot completely follow new information in recent years, and so it is difficult at this age to learn it.”

Sozoro nodded deeply, and without looking away from him Nec informed Izaya with a smile.

“Isozaka-cchi and I have been teaching him when we have the time, but Sozoro-san is taking it all in really fast. At this rate, Izaya-san, he may pass you in network information.”

“As long as I have the minimum skill and knowledge to observe humans it’s fine by me.”

“That sounds like nothing but excuses.”

Nec’s cackling laughter interrupted him, and then Sozoro began to speak as he stroked his beard.

“Nevertheless. Putting logic aside, Miss Nec, your abilities are to be feared. However, I must advise you that peeking into the abyss may also allow the other party access as well. Even so, please take precaution as to not let them locate your position.”

“Yeah, I’m borrowing the server instead of suspending the computer terminal of various people inside and outside the stadium, but.....”

Nec gave an innocent smile to Sozoro as she stated this so smoothly.

“If by chance it does happen, I’d really appreciate it if you help me escape, Sozoro-san. Hee hee!”

*Around the same time, Ryuusei’s Office*

“.....”

There was an office room, which can also be called Ryuusei’s personal room, adjacent to the VIP purpose suit room in one area of the baseball stadium. Tamae was in the middle of checking the security cameras when she made a stern face and stopped.

“What’s wrong, Tamae. Was there a strange occurrence?”

After Tamae thought over what to say, she answered her brother’s question with her brow creased in confusion.

“.....Just now, someone got it.”

“What?”

“In my tablet...well, more like the baseball team’s inner network connected to it. They may be able to see the hidden camera footage, so I’ll kick them out now.”

“Wait.”

Tamae’s fingers stopped at Ryuusei’s command.

“Could it be the same work as the culprit who replaced the data footage in the underground warehouse?”

“I thought of that, but...wait a minute. More than the anonymity software, there is an abnormal amount of access points so it’s impossible to pin-point, but I can confirm that it’s being accessed from inside the baseball stadium, so the possibility of them being somewhere in the stadium is high.”

“Is that so? If that’s it, then it’s best not to cause anything in the middle of the game. Let’s stop with that. We’ll pretend we never noticed the intruder.”

“My, would it be alright to let them think I’m an easy woman to get through?”

“They’re already tampering with the hidden cameras, right?”

“.....Probably.”

After letting out a small sigh, she questioned Ryuusei.

“But, at this rate what’s happening in the basement will be exposed, wouldn’t it?”

“That doesn’t matter. After all whoever it is probably is not thinking of reporting to the police. As long as the code for *that’s* vault isn’t leaked it’s no problem.”

*In the Baseball Stadium*

“So, was there any interesting footage?”

Nec continued to type on her laptop while smiling at Izaya’s question. With that sort of behavior he thought they would have already been discovered, but when Izaya looked around them he saw more humans than he thought looking at their laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

It seemed they were putting their reactions of the current status on the internet and posting their thoughts of the baseball match on SNS while also enjoying the game.

– Haha, so having come to see baseball in person is directly correlated to the connection with the internet?

– This is why humans are so interesting.

While he was thinking those thoughts, Nec’s fingers stopped crawling over the keyboard, and her smile disappeared suddenly.

“Eh...”

“? What’s wrong?”

“Well..... since it was just at a still screen, I tried to remove it, but...”

On Nec’s screen, he could see several men doing some sort of cleaning in a basement-like place somewhere. Seeing the details of the conduct, Izaya pondered over it for a while before making the widest smile in his entire day.

That was a scene Izaya has seen many times in the past.

The men were applying some sort of spray around the area while a special paper absorbed the spreading red liquid on the ground .

Izaya recalled the four elderly women employed by the illegal company, the Awakusu group, who did the same sort of work when he had been in Ikebukuro.

It was an under treatment to erase the luminol reaction by discernment and cover up large amounts of blood stains.

In other words, it showed that there were large volumes of blood stains there. And that it was the kind of blood that would have bad consequences if the police investigated it.

“Izaya-dono? What is it?”

“Hmmm? Ah, well, it’s nothing much.”

“You have a triumphant smile almost as if you yourself have hit a home run.”

“Well, it might as well be a feeling exactly like hitting a home run.”

Izaya smiled excitingly, and as he held back his desire to give an applause he mentioned one conjecture to Sozoro and Nec.

“It seems there was a murder and a power to erase the incident in this stadium.”

Certainly at this moment, Izaya Orihara was ecstatic.

To murder someone means a human’s emotions have surpassed a line or there was a burst of ‘energy’ that came forth as a result of the moment a person caved in.

It was a twisted way of thinking, but at the very least, Izaya Orihara thought that way.

As a result of that human pushing towards that direction, someone passed over the line, and a person died.

He never considered there would be such an incident this person caused in a baseball stadium. Izaya was grateful in his heart for exchanging the information fee for the baseball tickets from his client. And he expressed his gratitude for the murder to occur as a self fortune.

– Yeah, I guess this too is thanks to the days events.

However –

As though to ridicule Izaya thinking those thoughts from the bottom of his heart, his fate took a sudden turn in the next moment.

Inscrutable are the ways of heaven.

There is no pleasure without pain.

Fortune and misfortune are intertwined.

As though there needed to be a price for coincidental good fortune, there was



one more coincidence that assaulted him.

A foul ball came flying at the smiling Izaya.

At this rate, it was on course to hit him right in the head. A part of the crowd that was following the ball's direction cried out.

However, in the next moment, the ball was caught in Sozoro's hand beside him.

"Hm, catching it barehanded actually does shake these old bones. The human who invented the glove is most impressive."

The audience around them raised their voices in praise for Sozoro's feat. The whereabouts of the foul ball was clearly displayed in the diamond vision screen. Seeing the playback of Sozoro's fine play on the enormous screen, Izaya leaned his shoulders back and spoke.

"...Yeah, since you're my bodyguard I thought it was naturally a part of your job, but I will give you my thanks. Thank you, Sozoro-san."

At Izaya's honest words of gratitude, Nec acted innocently in surprise and said to him teasingly,

"Have you just noticed the ball was heading towards you? Could it be you peed yourself? Hee hee."

"I'm not a child. I wouldn't do that. It's just..."

"It's just?"

"I just recalled the times when I was in Ikebukuro and sudden steel garbage cans came flying at me. Compared to those times, I was quite fortunate."

However, Izaya did not realize. It was not that he deserved getting garbage cans thrown at him in Ikebukuro. It was not the misfortune brought upon him by the flying foul ball –

Rather, it was the coincidental chain of events that started the moment Sozoro caught the ball.

*Somewhere in Kantou A Ramen Shop*

"....."

That was a giant man.

He was roughly more than two meters tall. His face was covered with a black bandage and his blue-dyed hair, and even now looking at the man in the bursting suit, everyone, even including the shopkeeper of the ramen restaurant, imagined if he could be a professional wrestler from somewhere.

He had an air about him unseen to the respectable person, but it was better to consider ‘there is a pro wrestler I don’t know the name of next to me’ than ‘there is a yakuza member or killer next to me.’

He had glaring eyes and a long scar running across the uncovered part of the bandage. It was ridiculous to see a man with the appearance of a monster from some horror film to be having a meal normally in a ramen shop, but—

The more bizarre presence was the woman beside him.

She was a woman with a short build that onlookers assume her to be a young girl than a grown lady. While her features were extraordinarily arranged, the word ‘pretty’ would come to mind first rather than ‘beautiful.’ And such a fairy-like woman was seated at the same table as the monstrous giant.

“Look, Ayumi-chan! It says it’s recommended to order the *kaedama* before we should eat the noodles! Let’s take the chance and get some! Should the stiffness be extra firm? Just firm? Normal? Well let’s go with the recommended firm one! Can I have one firm please!”

“.....”

“What’s wrong, Ayumi-chan? ...Eh? Ahhh, you like yours softer?! I’m sorry! I was careless! Excuse me~! Can you change the firm noodles to soft please!”

“.....”

The woman corrected the order, and the giant exhaled in relief when the shop assistant replied in acknowledgement.

It was almost like an older sister taking care of her useless little brother, but the people in the shop around them doubted they were siblings no matter how they looked at them.

There were more people who took an interest in the woman talking equally

with the frightening man than that giant's unfitting name, Ayumi. She seemed like a beautiful woman, or perhaps a pretty girl, who would get flirted on if she was walking alone after all.

*Are they married or are they lovers?*

Those ideas were too imbalanced. The man did not seem like a kidnapper who would abduct girls, but the woman's attitude negated that thought from the beginning.

However, they hardly looked like siblings.

The customers considered the possibilities, but in the next moment a shocking word reached their ears.

"Seriously. You need to speak up more. Everyone at home would take care of you even when you're quiet, but if you leave elsewhere without me, your mother, you wouldn't be able to do anything! Whenever that happens, your dead father will laugh in his grave!"

Some of the customers around them spit out their ramen or water at that.

– Mother!?

– Just now, did she just call herself *mother*!?

– I must have misheard right!?

The customers and the employee carrying the *kaedama* were deeply confused, but that large man hung his head to his *mother's* sermons.

His name was Ayumi Usubara.

He was a scoundrel running riot as 'Adamura's pet whale' for the Adamura family who formerly controlled the mining town, Bunokura.

And the person sitting in front of him was Yuuki Usubara.

She was the second wife of Usubara's father and his step-mother, but –

The troubling matter was that she was still twenty-three years old and about five years younger than Ayumi. His father was bedridden from illness when he suddenly introduced his second wife to him, and for reasons Usubara could not comprehend he had to accept her as his step-mother.

And then, his father passed away soon after.

However, no one thought his second wife did anything to him. Because of his father's medical bills the Usubara family hardly had any money, and the remaining debt was put on her shoulders.

Apparently his mother had been hitchhiking on a trip from Tokyo when she found his father collapsed along the roadside, and in the time she took care of him they had hit it off and got married, but Usubara was not told much of the fine circumstances and details.

She was younger than he was, but Usubara did not consider Yuuki as his own mother as she was completely different from her, but he could not treat the woman unkind as a mother at times when she was sincere or when she would sternly confront him.

Usubara was an outlaw, and depending on the circumstances he would crush people without hesitation, but he was a shy man to ladies, old or young.

But now he was no longer part of a gang.

A while back in the town he lived in previously, Bunokura, there was a certain incident that occurred which caused the mine to shut down and the group he was employed by to spontaneously disappear.

Usubara knew of the one man responsible for those incidents. It could be thought as an animal-like intuition, but in actuality that intuition has never been wrong.

"So? It was Izaya Orihara-kun, right? Do you think that kid is still in this prefecture?"

She should also be younger than Izaya Orihara, but Yuuki talked as though he was her son Ayumi's friend. They actually were not friends, and to Usubara he was an enemy he could not help but loath, but he could not help being disconcerted to it when it came to his step-mother.

His step-mother heard from the heavily injured Usubara and others involved of what happened and had said,

'I got it! So you fought with this kid Izaya Orihara-kun and that kid's ojiichan!

Then you lost and came back.....? I won't forgive this! For others to butt in a children's fight. If that's the case, I will go with you and complain to them!'

It had ended up becoming an extremely strange situation of the two leaving to search for Izaya Orihara.

Usubara was not that bright, but his step-mother understood that the network of his brain tissue was a bit haywire. Her family was pretty wealthy, so she had an abundance of money for funding the trip.

And yet, although he wondered if it was really alright to continue this life style, the revenge he swore towards Izaya Orihara boiled up within him.

“.....”

He had no intention of giving up. However, it was true that he alone did not have even a guess on how to find Izaya Orihara's whereabouts. Usubara's mission was to carry out his revenge to Izaya and that old man so he could end this journey with his extraordinary mother-child.

Until he saw the men on the ramen shop's television screen.

“Still he's pretty amazing, isn't he? That Munakata-san and this Kanshirou-kun. My aunt Miharuru got along with Munakata's mother really well. I've met him too, that Kanshirou-kun!”

“.....”

His mother exclaimed, but Usubara continued to watch the television screen.

“That's right. My aunt Miharuru's kid...meaning my kid cousin, works for a publisher. We should get a lot of information on Orihara-kun, so when you meet my aunt you got to properly greet her, okay?”

“.....”

Usubara nodded vaguely while still watching the TV, but the moment a foul ball hit by a certain batter flew towards the audience a flame ignited in his eyes from the openings in his bandage.

“Ori...hara...”

“Huh? What's wrong, Ayumi-chan?”

Surprised to hear her step-son's rare voice, Yuuki moved her gaze to the television screen too. When she did she saw the events that just happened on the VTR. In them an elderly man magnificently caught the foul ball, and beside him there was a man in a wheelchair with wide eyes.

It was Izaya Orihara. And the elderly man chaperoning him.

His former employer, Adamura, told Usubara before he disappeared, "that is Densuke Sozoro.....he is one of the legends. It's better to not to go up against him,." But he could not be told to let it go in front of his the man responsible for his humiliation of defeat from that time.

It was even more so for the man responsible for the result of that defeat, Izaya Orihara, who had thrown up a bomb from the sidelines. If there was furthermore to say, it seemed that man Izaya Orihara also wrecked his hometown.

With various emotions mixing together, Usubara screamed out his enemy's name in deep resentment from that large mouth, just like the imagined whale he was titled as.

"Orihara.....Izayaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

The customers and employees mistook the yell full of clear killing intent as their own lives being in danger, and they trembled in fear.

However, in the midst of that, Yuuki puffed her cheeks in exasperation and kicked Usubara's shin with all her strength.

"Gah..."

Usubara made a small cry from being kicked in his weak point. His step-mother scolded Usubara with her eyebrow raised on her child-like face.

"You can't make a fuss in the shop! Not! Good!"

And then glancing towards the TV, she recited words that were surely slipped from there.

"That baseball stadium, that's the Natsugawara's place."

"If that's the case, I think we can get there in a taxi in about an hour."

# What Type of Person Is Izaya Orihara? (Haruto's Case)

*One Year Ago*

What do I think of Izaya-oniichan?

Hmm, I don't really know.

But when we were in trouble he helped us out, and he gives us meals and treats too! He said he would even give me any toy I would like too, but I can wait!

You see, before, when I told my dad and mom I wanted a toy they said, 'if you want something you have to work hard on your studies and exercise.' But I haven't done any studying or exercise since I've been at Izaya's place, and I talked with Himari-chan and thought that bothering Izaya wouldn't do any good.

Izaya-oniichan says that sort of thing doesn't matter, but when I really want something, I'm going to properly help Izaya-oniichan to get it!

Huh? What kind of help...? Well, umm, with a lot of things.

I'm not really sure but maybe by helping carrying a bag or calling people over! There's been times when scary people chased us, but Izaya-oniichan and Sozoro-ojiichan saved us!

But Himari-chan says I shouldn't really trust him. I wonder why...?

I wonder why Izaya-oniichan saved us...? I wonder if it is alright if I don't go to school now.....Not being able to see my friends makes me a bit lonely. But Izaya-oniichan says I'll be able to make a lot of friends from now on. I wonder if that's true.

Ummm, miss, what is your name? Nec? Ahaha, what a weird name!

Ahhhh, it hurts, don't pull my cheeks.

*Present*

About Izaya-san? He's a good person! He's a really, really great person!

When Himari-chan and I were going through difficult times, Izaya-san lent out his hand towards us. He said we wouldn't have to go to school, so he teaches us everything on math, Japanese, English, economics and science!

I'm not lonely at all! I got to make plenty of friends! There's Sozoro-ojiichan who teaches me something called *juujutsu*. Then there's Isozaka-san who teaches me on how to drive a car. There's Lisa-chan who makes these amazing fireworks! And there's Fujiura-san who tells me what mushrooms and grass I must not eat. And Mamiya-chan...she says nothing but bad things about Izaya-san, so I don't like her that much...

Well, I only met them when we went to Tokyo, but Mikage and Kine both said that I've got potential. They teach me a lot of things!

What's this? Yeah, it's a new game console! Izaya-san bought it for me! I really helped out you see! Himari-chan and I helped keep the door shut so bad people wouldn't get out of the back of the store, and we even handed over a bag full of pictures to the person we were told to bring it to! I also help push Izaya-san's wheelchair. Izaya-san's wheelchair is so light it's easy enough for even me to move around! Even now there are times when bad people chase us, but it's alright! If it's only one person, Himari-chan and I can beat him while we're running around.

We can do a lot of things if we listen to Izaya. I think Izaya-san has some sort of super power for sure! He sees the future! After all, Izaya-san would say, 'it turned out how I thought it would,' no matter the situation and smile.

Himari-chan calls Izaya-san a swindler, but just what is a swindler....?

But it's been a while since I've talked to you like this, Nec-oneechan. This time you got to show me how to use that computer!

That's right, I heard from Izaya-san that your real name is Hisae-san! Izaya-san says that your nickname Nec is actually from ahahhh-, hmmmph-.

That hurts, Nec-oneechan! Why did you suddenly strangle me like that?!

Wha? You're going to go kill Izaya-san...Wh-why?! No! You can't do that! If you're going to kill Izaya-san kill me instead!

Wait, Nec-oneechan! Nec-oneechan...!



## Translation Notes:

1. “Kandou” (感動) is a noun which means “being deeply moved emotionally.” Hence it is written with the characters “feeling” and “movement.” Which is what Izaya is pretty much breaking down in that one sentence.

2. Kaedama is an extra serving of noodles you can order when you have mainly the broth left. This only applies for ramen noodles, not for udon or soba.

# 二章

## ダブルプレー



## Chapter 2: Double Play

Fudou was impatient.

Currently the Natsugawara Serpent's game occurring at the stadium was being closely watched by the world. But even if it was a game that not many were paying much attention to, if something were to happen in this day and age the news would spread throughout the entire world in short time with the internet.

And if that happens and *that* is discovered, everything will be at an end.

Even after confirming that the body had been taken care of, the head of the baseball team's management would completely change. However, Ryuusei Takioka has settled these incidents many times before.

In the past many extortionists and free-writers who tried to threaten Ryuusei would suddenly disappear. He was unaware how many have been erased directly right in front of Ryuusei, but the lingering malice around him probably means the number could not be counted on the fingers of both hands.

However, if *that* is discovered it would completely change everything.

Unlike the instances of the murders or abandonment of bodies laid to rest at Takioka's arrest, there was the fear of the baseball team dying off. If done poorly, there was the possibility of the Natsugawara group to decline itself.

The Natsugawara Group may cut ties with the Takioka faction and act as the victim that was corrupted from the inside to manipulate the public and social media to not allow that to happen. That power belonged to the Natsugawara Group alone.

At any rate, he was not a worthless human waiting for his own destruction. After just making a successful career path through Takioka, he had already taken a bite out of the center of *that* as well. In which case, there was also the possibility Takioka would put the blame on him and silence him.

– This is serious.

– Even though I just managed to line my pockets.

He recalled Amagi's dead face as he shook.

Amagi was one of Ryuusei's secretaries strapped to his side and had been a teller for *that* externally on multiple occasions. And because of it he was targeted by the culprit and was put down after questioning.

That was what he thought, but now he did not think that the culprit was the terrifying one. It was not the dead face that appeared in Fudou's mind of the moment when he discovered it, but the overwritten image of the face destroyed by Ryuusei's kicks.

He evened his breathing quietly, turned on his hand-held radio and gave orders to his fellow subordinate guards indirectly.

"It's Fudou. Inform all the guard personnel. A birthday cake has arrived from the department for all of us in the stadium. I think there is some mistake in all probability, but the executive has accepted it modestly. That is the case, so be more vigilant on your job more than usual."

Initially it sounded like a joke to motivate his subordinates, but it was all a secret language prepared for radio interception. The guards took it as their next order.

'There has been a notice that a bomb has been planted in the baseball stadium. I think it is a prank, but the executive has given the order to not make this public. Just to be sure, reinforce security.'

The guards comprehended its real meaning and moved around in hast, their expressions tense.

– Seriously, how easygoing.

The general guards under Fudou did not know of *that* and naturally did not know of the incident with the dead body. Therefore, it was necessary to strengthen security with just barely a range of non-suspicion. Fudou remained in fear alone, jealous of his blissfully unaware subordinates working diligently. Unless they could find the culprit before a second murder happens, his future will be nothing more than a path of destruction.

However, his wish was in vain, The situation had already begun its course in deterioration. He still has not realized the worst person participating in the case

was within this theater Ryuusei controls; not as a stage performer but as an audience member.

But then, at just the point of realizing it he could not do anything about it.

### *In the Audience*

“So? Was there any interesting information about the baseball team company, Nec-chan?”

Izaya asked Nec during the top of the second inning.

“It’s fairly well. Hee hee.”

“I think there is information I know already, but anyway, go on.”

“Will this be included as work?”

“I can’t increase your pay, but how about I give you a personal bonus? I’ll buy you a new tablet or PC. Whatever you like to trace with your fingers.”

He told Nec, who previously stated that she ‘doesn’t like tablets,’ but perhaps she has gotten used to him as she replied back without facing towards him.

“Thank you. I’ll use it as a shuriken and throw it at you~.”

She belonged to an inquiry company called ‘Candiru,’ and she was a pro reigning as the top of the information dealing there.

Nonetheless, it was a company that tread on the line of or more than half of illegal functionality. Even so she had too much freedom to claim as the top of the field, and she had not yet settled down at one place since she was not working full time somewhere.

Starting from Candiru’s temporary president Isozaka and the actual top of the company Izaya, only a few people were capable of contacting her with Nec being one of her aliases passed throughout the company.

Even so her skills in information gathering on the net was certain. Depending on the assignment she had gone as far as collecting data in the images folder related to the person’s fetishes on their personal computer without discretion.

She began to talk to Izaya about the information he asked her to look into between the third switch between the offense and defense teams.

“The Natsugawara Group was originally a toy shop that has continued for generations. It’s a conglomerate made by this old man with an amazing name as Byakuyamaru Natsugawara. Even though it’s a group that has become enormous at this point, it’s pretty rare for a toy company to be its main business. Depending on the period of time, they may have been called the Natsugawara *zaibatsu*.”

“Huh. Continue.”

“It seems before they had a ton of spies from overseas enterprises, but for some reason they were all rounded up by the Ikebukuro police in Saitama and were annihilated. There’s talk that it was the president Byakuyamaru Natsugawara’s plan behind the scenes, so it may be quite fitting. This Natsugawara Baseball Stadium is one of the associated groups, but...this place is a little unique. It seems there isn’t even one person from either the Natsugawara’s relatives or directors who have supported the Natsugawara Group over the years involved in the administration here.”

Nec proceeded to list off the information with an emotionless and indifferent manner like reading software on her computer. Although, she was reading out the letters appearing on an imaginary monitor inside her brain instead from her laptop screen.

“Ryuusei Takioka. It seems he’s called a rebel instead of a young hope. He made expansions with his influence while also creating his own faction within the Natsugawara group before finally obtaining the administrative position of both the stadium and the baseball team. To top it off, there is a rumor that he is trying to gain the Natsugawara Group’s true power, but the fact that they can’t eliminate him may mean he knows various weaknesses of the group.”

She put all the muddled information she has gathered just previously and sorted them out into one piece of data in her head as though she worked out mental arithmetic of abacus. Her own voice had less intonation feelings that could not be read too much into, but her eyes were ablaze, as though she immersed in the pleasure of collecting and exposing the hidden information of a big corporation.

“It seems this Ryuusei Takioka is just some elite’s kid. Looks like he’s

independently connected to underground organizations too. His main business partners are the Kadokawa group and Asuki group. You did business with them too, right~? Do you know something?”

“I wonder about that. The last part of my time in Ikebukuro was mainly business with the Awakusu group. Besides, the Asuki group are not stupid enough to reveal their conversations with their business partners to an informant like myself.”

“Still, there’s an abundant amount of connections in the Asuki group’s network. I’m entering their computer that’s connected to the internet with their guns exchange after all. Hee hee.”

Nec continued to provide further information after letting out an irregular laugh with a token of emotion.

Hearing that chuckle, Izaya thought to himself.

It seemed there was information tumbling out around Ryuusei enough for Nec to let out a laugh. Izaya listened to Nec’s continuation on the topic and considered how this was connected to the ‘incident’ that happened in the underground warehouse and chose to wait for the situation to roll out excitingly with eyes like an elementary schooler on summer break.

To be precise, he prepared his heart to welcome with genuine delight the ‘humans’ faces’ that will change as the situation unfolds.

While aware of how twisted it was, he did not feel like fixing it.

*At the same time, Ryuusei’s office*

“If this is the case, should we have had a better trade of guns with the Asuki group?”

Recalling that this room was one of the ‘places planned for a murder,’ Ryuusei whispered that to himself.

“My, nii-san. Do you feel like having a shoot-out in the stadium? Besides, how many do you already have?”

Ryuusei responded to his sister’s rebuke with a self-possessed attitude.

“It means we should have better guns. It’s not just the efficiency. Something

as a suitable self-arm weapon for myself since I like pretentious articles.”

“If that’s the case, the Asuki group isn’t the one. Their goods are being sold in quantity more than quality.”

“Tamae, don’t say that. There is a person from that old nest here.”

He gave a fleeting glance to the subordinate. He bowed his head slightly in response. From his physique and manner, he could be thought of someone employed as a bodyguard rather than an office assistant.

“Oh right, my apologies. I didn’t mean to say anything bad of the Asuki group.”

“It is alright. It is the truth.”

The man bowed his head in answer with an indifferent attitude.

Just as Tamae was working to identify the suspicious character, there was a knock at the office’s door.

“.....”

Tension coursed through the guards. As this room was designated as a place for a planned murder, there was the possibility of the culprit barging in fully armed. Although, they thought it a comfort if he was such an imprudent criminal.

“...Come in.”

After Ryuusei granted them permission to enter, the door opened to reveal three figures. They were a man around his fifties with hawk-like sharp eyes and hair with strands of white, a large man following behind him, and a bespectacled, secretary-like woman.

“Well now, it is Hiura-sama. I thought of greeting you personally, but I apologize having you to take the trouble of coming all the way here to do so in my place.”

Ryuusei bowed his head in a courteous manner, but his words clearly indicated they were not out of respect but were instead the stance of phrasing for an ‘equal business partner.’



Whether the man called Hiura was aware of this, he ignored the greeting. He smiled and spat out.

“It seems there is some sort of trouble going on.”

“So it seems. For a third consecutive home run connecting from the evening game to occur. If there is a fourth consecutive home run it will be a major record lining up with the king players, so if I had to give a comment as the baseball team’s manager...”

“Don’t kid with me. Besides Sadaharu Oh’s record is four consecutive home runs without a walk in one game. If it was four hits for the game, the number of people would increase. Although there would be no doubt it would be an impressive record.”

“As I would expect of you, Hiura-sama. You are quite informed on baseball.”

“Just because you’re the baseball team manager doesn’t mean you’re interested in the sport.”

After cracking his neck, Hiura went back to the main subject at hand.

“The guards have really gotten active.”

“There are audience members who get excited with the home run.”

“I believe I said ‘don’t kid with me.’ The guards received something through their radios, right? Something about a cake delivered to all us members from the department.”

“Well now, putting aside the fact our radios were intercepted.... Did they have some? The cake. My apologizes. All of it was already consumed.”

“That was a secret language for a warning of an explosion, wasn’t it? Tell me what is going on. It has to do with our safety as well.”

And then after releasing a breathe, Hiura asked with sharp, narrowed eyes.

“...Does it have anything delaying *that*?”

“I see, you certainly are an interested party. It may be better to not know. When you hear the details, you will be in the same boat as us. Since you want to leave the stage, I give you fair warning.”

“And that is what I’m talking about right now.”

Hiura snorted at him. But Ryuusei merely spread his hands out in a playful manner.

“Alright then, let us talk. All of you could become victims or even suspects.”

“Suspects...what?”

“Since we already decided not to get any police involved I wondered if I should use this term, but, oh well, it is a case that happened in my theater. If you think of it as a crime-suspense act, as you can easily understand, you should be designated as ‘one of the suspects’.”

At Ryuusei’s provocation, Hiura shook his head in disappointment like a parent who had several years difference in age from his child in a roundabout way.

“As always you’re a crazed man. So while being an executive of the Natsugawara group, you behave like that.”

“Is that just ceasing to think when you call an existence that has passed your limit of understanding as ‘crazed’? That is a word that indicates no respect for the person who has managed to pass your scope of common knowledge. Are you a beast? Prefecture vice governor Ranzou Hiura.”

“Leave it, youngster.”

The the vice governor, Ranzou Hiura, passed by the arrogant man and deeply sunk himself into the leather sofa for visitors.

“So let’s talk about it. What kind of suspect I am.”

*In the Audience*

“I see. So he is friends with the vice governor, Hiura.”

“I just saw the footage of the VIP room, but he brought in only confidants to see him. About his stadium’s VIP room. Look, you can see it from here right? It’s an indoor seat behind the glass barrier, but it seems it’s 200,000 for one game. It can’t be that he came at the public’s expense, right? Hee hee.”

As Nec mentioned the VIP room with a cheerful laugh, the children in the free

seats next to them ran up to Izaya just as the second inning was ending.

“Izaya-san! Izaya-san! Do you think Munakata will hit a home run next time too?”

“You’re too energetic.”

The boy waved his limbs about in excitement, while the girl spoke to him in a chiding voice.

“Say, Haruto-kun and Himari-chan. Would you like to watch the game from the VIP seat over there?”

Izaya asked casually, pointing to the VIP room Nec just told him about. After the children – Haruto and Himari – looked at each other, they answered.

“Eh~, no way. After all, that’s too far from the players!”

“I don’t want to go to a seat behind my disposition. If it was midday in summer, I would probably want to go because it’d be hot.”

“You two are quite honest. How about I give you some spending money as your rewards. Get a hotdog or a snow cone. Buy anything you would like.”

Izaya pulled out his pocket and gives a thousand yen bill to each.

“Whoa! Thank you, Izaya-san! I’m going to go get Sandie-san’s Ice Cream!”

“...Thank you.”

While Haruto jumped and flailed around, Himari glanced at Izaya with a suspicious eye rather than a shy manner, and both stated their own words for thanks.

After watching the children run off to the shop corner, Izaya continued the restless conversation with the same smile he gave the children.

“So? What type of connection does he have with the vice governor Hiura?”

“Hmmm, that is a face of a little child in front of ice cream.”

“Indeed, information is similar to ice cream. Ice cream satisfies one’s appetite, and the sugar activates their brain. And additionally it gets them excited. It’s the same as interesting information. It satisfies one’s desire and clears their mind, and it then stirs them up.”

Hearing Sozoro's miffed voice from behind his back, Izaya requested Nec for the baseball team manager's secret information.

"Well, it's not just Hiura. It seems there are a lot of financiers and underground companies he has connections with. It looks he's got some sort of connection with a president of a corporation that's a cover up for an overseas mafia."

"You're really something. I don't know how many people could find so much from the network under these circumstances. From the people I know, you are about the top level in Honshu."

"I want to be called the number one best in Japan, but I'm not that conceited. Kee hee hee. There is Ikebukuro's Tsukumoya, Niigata's Yatsufusa and Hakata's Jersey 24 after all. Oh. Vice governor Hiura's tax evasion information just came out, but I guess that's irrelevant now. Kee hee."

She provided numerous amounts of information that should never be made public. Even the seemingly unnatural relationship Ryuusei Takioka and vice governor Hiura have was information generally not well known in the first place.

Though just by collecting information one after the other, even the proof of the tax evasion, from just the laptop in her possession indicated towards Nec's abilities as abnormal, but as long as there were information to be found on the surface layer, she continued to type on the keyboard with nimble fingers cheerfully.

"In all honesty, it's because the Natsugawara group is a big company bringing attention to even inside Candiru. I didn't want to meaninglessly be hostile to them so I didn't look into it much, but I've set up a foundation for times like this."

"Really, you'll be careful, right? Although, rest assured they'll come to the realization that you did this all by yourself."

"That's great. I'll become a celebrity who spread the big corporation's dark secrets. They'll say, 'die idi~ot. I-di~ot'."

Nec hit on the keys with a cackling laugh.

In the stadium which was currently changing offense and defense teams, she was the most excited audience member out of anyone. Although, it was a result with nothing to do with baseball but due to the 'game' only she was taking part in.

### *Ryuusei's Office*

"I see. So *that* has been exposed outside from here?"

Ryuusei smiled happily, while Hiura made a sour expression.

"It still hasn't gotten out. If it is something happening within this stadium, it is still an internal matter."

"...How can you be so full of confidence?"

"This Summer Tile Stadium has been under my control since it was rebuilt three years ago. I completely managed to play off or fool the Natsugawara Group's meddling. It is solely my stadium working perfectly in every function by me, for me. If the match is held in this stadium, the victories and loses of even the star players who bring in the popularity of the citizens are in the palm of my hand."

Hiura felt an eerie, unsettling fear towards Ryuusei who talked as though this was a suitable precedent reasoning, but he was not so much as an accessory to this man to show that on his face.

"...If that is possible, wouldn't it be certain for the Serpents to be the champions if they win every home game?"

"Yes, it is because I am not so insistent on victories. Besides, the production of a play that makes it feel like an apparent fixed game will hurt my pride."

"...The ones who would get hurt from a fixed game would be the players' pride.....Well, more than that, will the exchange of *that* be carried out?"

"Of course. In the case the culprit was part of an armed force, we would receive a blow from that, but...there's no way he can see through our trick."

Hiura took in a silent breath.

"Are you following the culprit's objective?"

“We’ll follow shortly. We won’t allow any improper movements.”

Ryuusei provided that as an answer and picked up the remote left on his office desk. Pressing on the buttons, he showed footage of the “front” and “back” of the security system on the room’s projector from the computer monitor.

“We’re analyzing the full operations from the audience seats to the hallways and from the exits to the shops outside the stadium and the parking lots.”

With more to add, his sister Tamae continued her explanation.

“We improved the system so that if any of the temporary monitors’ footage was changed it would immediately detect it. If he uses the same technique he did the first time, we will be able to determine where the culprit will move next.”

With that out of the way, she changed the topic from the place put under warning. It was an action to show Hiura that there was nothing wrong, but that again drew in the strange *fate*.

“Izaya...Orihara...?”

“Eh?”

Hearing the sudden proper noun-like name, Tamae stopped from changing the screen.

“Who spoke just now?”

Ryuusei asked everyone in the room politely in front of Hiura. Yet the man nervously raising his hand was the one who spoke to Tamae earlier; the bodyguard who was formerly part of the crime organization, the Asuki group.

“My apologies, executive. There was a face I recognized in the wheelchair seat.”

“...Is it a personal acquaintance?”

If that was the case it would be nothing particularly to be concerned about and could be just thought of as a strange coincidence. But Ryuusei considered his origins and decided to indulge in the matter.

“No, he is a person related to my last place of work.”

“Will you let us hear the details?”

The Medei group’s Asuki group was currently going through with an exchange.

If this person had been connected with the Asuki group at one period of time and was currently in the stadium outside of Ryuusei’s knowledge, then he would be a prominent ‘influential suspect.’

The former gang member decided to answer after wavering on it for a few moments.

“With this, my previous employers...”

“It’s alright. All of this will be kept here and no where else. No one will tell that you leaked information from your previous work place, and even if that’s the case I wouldn’t earn a penny from it.”

“Thank you, sir...Well, he is not a member of the organization...I heard that he supposedly died, so I was surprised to see he is alive.”

Ryuusei stared to pressure the guard for his halfhearted behavior.

“You can tell your personal thoughts later. First, what is his name? Orihara... was it?”

“He is Izaya Orihara. ‘Izaya’ is written as the ‘*rin*’ in ‘seaside school’ and ‘*nari*’ as in ‘*affirmation*.’ It is a normally unreadable, unique reading. He is a man who worked as an informant around Ikebukuro and Shinjuku.”

“An informant?”

Ryuusei’s brows creased. He also was at least aware of the existence of informants. However, they were men who work for detective agencies or were hosts for cabaret clubs. Or in some instances they were people selling and buying information as protégés for reporters or policemen to make a living off of.

“Is he a host or something? He certainly seems to have that air about him...”

“No, as the word suggests, he is an *informant*. Would it be easier to

understand if you think of the informants you administer? He specializes in gathering information from around the city and selling it for a high price to others.”

“I see. So it is the age where brokers are born from city gossip? The fact that the Asuki group used him should mean he is a suitable resource then?”

Looking at the man in the wheelchair use space, he recalled that he was the man Tamae took notice of previously.

“I see, he certainly is a man with a strange atmosphere around him, but...for even a man who makes a living by exchanging information to have a butler and a high quality wheelchair. He must be quite prosperous.”

“That is correct. Since he has exchanged inside information I thought perhaps he himself may have made a considerable amount of money from the stock. However, before he disappeared, he also did exchanges with a group we were on bad terms with, the Awakusu group, for a while. I heard rumors that he caused a dispute between the local gangs or foreigners or something and was punched or stabbed to death.”

“Hmm. Considering that he’s in a wheelchair, perhaps his cervical spine or somewhere else got injured from that dispute then...However, the Awakusu group, huh. The Awakusu group...Alright, I see now! So he was connected then!”

Ryuusei clasped his hands together and said with dazzling eyes.

“It wouldn’t be strange for him to grasp the information on *that* if he was affiliated with the Medei group or in the higher ranks of the Awakusu group. Even more so if they had a rival relationship with the Asuki group. Using the protégé informant they would first issue a threat, and if it all works out they would steal all the concessions. But even if that wouldn’t work they may have the intention to say, ‘if you don’t want *that* exposed add it to the concessions.’”

“Eh.”

“If that’s the case, then this is easy. It is not entirely necessary for a murder to take place at any of the notified areas for them to succeed. If the informant in that wheelchair space yelled he was ‘stabbed’ in the stomach it would cause the



audience to go in a panic, and that would be enough for the Awakusu group to use that as a threat against me. For the contents of the disposal of Amagi's body to be solicited, then it would be possible if it was someone with the power the Awakusu has."

"Ah, no, um.....we are unsure if that is the case."

The former Asuki member guard threw water down on Ryuusei's conjecture in haste. The Asuki group and the Awakusu group could have never been said to be on good terms, even now when the Medei group had been reorganized into a larger organization than the Kadokawa association. On the day rumors indicating that the Awakusu group tried to steal the Asuki's concessions spread around, a conflict could arise from it.

Unable to bear the thought that his careless words could have started a dispute, the guard had a cold sweat forming on his forehead.

"Indeed. You can relax. I don't have that short of a temper. Everything at this point is an assumption. Although, if the Awakusu group really is using that informant and thinks they can have some way with me.....Haha, well, if they are putting me down that much...."

Ryuusei nodded numerous times while keeping a smile on his face and—

The next moment, he smashed the glass ash tray on his desk with his fist.

"I'll have them pay for the crime of laying waste to my theater."

Ryuusei addressed each person in the room with an eloquent smile, his hand sluggishly bleeding. Everyone took shuddering breaths at the sight.

"First, let's make it so that informant can't leave the stadium..... Permanently."

In the middle of the tense atmosphere filled by unrest killing intent made by Ryuusei's statement, Hiura slowly rose and gave a sigh.

"Well, that's fine. Since we don't want to become 'victims.' We'll be moving independently as well."

"Well now, what do you plan to do, lieutenant governor Hiura?"

Giving Ryuusei an annoyed glare for adding on his occupation title

courteously, Hiura answered as an insinuation.

“I will only be moving independently to solve the case. By making contact with that informant.”

*In front of a shop stand*

Iroha Mayuzumi was a member of the third investigation team. She usually worked at the stadium as a beer salesgirl. She had short hair, with a portion of a long bang covering one of her eyes, which resulted in her receiving high praised remarks from the regulars to the baseball stadium as someone ‘rather mysterious’ for it.

However, behind that face, she carried out the baseball company’s dirty work under Ryuusei’s direction. As such when trouble arises within the baseball stadium she was someone to settle the matter with unclean methods.

Presently, she was working in collaboration with security to watch for suspicious characters. Unlike each of the security personnel, people like her were told the important information through a unique code.

While she was patrolling the stadium under the orders given from the top of security, Fudou, she had received a new order to carry out by name.

‘The man in black who brought the old man with him in the wheelchair space. Keep your full attention on that man, Izaya Orihara.’

The designated wheelchair space was not far from where she currently was selling beer at. Iroha briefly glanced over there, and just as the information provided to her said the man dressed in complete black was there sitting in a wheelchair in front of a butler-like elderly man.

“—!”

In that moment, fear ran through her whole body.

Iroha had done plenty of illegal work up until this point, and she even had taken people’s lives on occasion and faced professionals like those hitmen from movies and theatrical plays many times over. But the moment she saw the two men a warning bell rang in her head from past experiences.

*Those two are bad news.*

She felt something repulsive from the young man's gaze as he observed his surroundings, but the elderly man was much more of an irregularity.

It was not as if he was emitting killing intent or intimidation. Rather, she felt tranquility mixed in with the air around him. But from his demeanor she could not say that was a good attribute.

It almost seemed like the dangerous aura seeping from his open back was saying, 'feel free to come at me.' Iroha gulped slightly.

- This sucks.
- Even if they were to say to kidnap the two, I wouldn't be able to.
- That old man is probably insanely strong.
- If the third investigation division took up arms....
- .....
- Huh? No way. We'd lose even then?

She imagined a simulation in her head, but it only led to the worst outcome.

*No, her intuition is dull. It's because that old man may not actually be that strong.*

She told herself quietly took a step forward.

She would approach them as a salesgirl to make certain if she was right with her own eyes.

However—

Perhaps this was because she was watching the old man too closely. Her path closed off, not realizing the boy running her way from the shop.

They ran into each other with great force. Turning around, there was a young boy staring at the fallen ice cream with wide eyes.

"Ah....ah...."

"It was because you were running around carelessly, you klutz."

Looking at the boy with teary eyes, Iroha gave a professional smile and bent over.

Haruto had ran without looking ahead of him, and now he looked down at the ice cream he just bought that had fell onto the ground from the impact.

After standing there dumbfounded and realizing what transpired, his eyes welled up with tears, but he said to the 'lady selling alcohol in the stadium.'

"I'm alright!"

Haruto looked up at her and managed to stop his tears from falling.

"I'm sorry, onee-chan. It's because I wasn't watching everything around me..."

"It's alright, come here!"

Haruto was led by the hand, his expression blank. After she brought him over to the ice cream shop, she told the shop attendant.

"Excuse me, I carelessly ran into him....can you give this child the same product?"

"Alright. It's pretty rare for Mayuzumi-chan to run into someone."

The older woman in the shop remarked before preparing the same ice cream Haruto previously just bought.

"Alright, so this time we both will be careful, right!"

"Um, but the money....."

"It's fine. This is a service from the manager of the baseball stadium, so take it!"

Haruto was nervous to accept something from a stranger, but the moment the girl that came with him, Himari, told him "...take it," his eyes shone brightly and bowed with an innocent smile.

"Whaa! Onee-chan! Thank you!"

The 'it's a service from the manager' line she recited was not a phrase she conjured up in the moment; it was from the manual the executive Ryuusei Takioka thought up for the staff to adhere by. She did not know if he wanted to plant the image of him being a 'generous executive' to the audience members, but in actuality the executive did not spare money as service for them. But all the staff understood that it was mere bait in order to manipulate the audience.

The only ones who knew the difference of the executive Ryuusei's outward appearance and his true nature were each of his confidants and a small fraction of the third investigation division, but even the general employees working at the stadium presumed the stagnate air around him. The Summer Tile Stadium was not built as a paradise for the audience but as a heaven managed by the dictator Ryuusei Takioka.

She was still alright carrying out the dirty work for that dictator's job, but while she considered it was troublesome to do that for a publicity stunt Iroha saw the boy off with a smile and went to go clean the discarded ice cream on the floor.

However, the words the boy said in his conversation with the girl next to him pull at Iroha's heart.

"Seriously, you really are a child. Getting so excited over ice cream."

"But! It's my first time having a three-scoop ice cream, so I thought I have to show Izaya-san before it melts."

— .....

— .....Izaya?

The proper noun she was told of earlier on their own communication network was the name the boy coincidentally mentioned just now. Iroha turned around to see boy's back as he ran off in a beeline, leaving the girl that was walking beside him. And to the terrific, frightful man in the wheelchair and the old man just previously.

Iroha Mayuzumi had still not realized.

That the fact she encountered the boy here would decide the fate of several individuals just a little while later. And that her own fate would also make a full 180 degree turn.

Confused, she looked between the man in the wheelchair and the smiling boy who returned to his side and unconsciously whispered.

"Izaya Orihara.....what kind of person is he?"

Although at about the same time the third inning began, leaving her whisper

erased by the enthusiasm of the crowd so that no one could hear it.

*Ryuusei's office*

“.....Kids?”

Watching the footage of the wheelchair space on the screen, Ryuusei frowned slightly. There was a boy around elementary school age who ran up to the man in the wheelchair and started to talk about something cheerfully. And then a girl he assumed to be around the same age as the boy appeared a little bit thereafter and seemed to start a conversation with the old man on something.

“.....You think this is some kind of camouflage?”

“No, he may be using the kids to contact his friends. Continue observing.”

“Understood, nii-san.”

Tamae provided as an answer before turning her attention to one person shown on the monitor. It was the woman wearing gothic-punk clothes and glasses. She was facing her laptop and was doing something on it.

“.....Could that also be one of his friends?”

She just kept diligently working on her laptop without really paying attention to the baseball game. She thought she could be talking with Izaya Orihara, but since she hardly turned to face in his direction she could not tell for certain.

*Though the fact she was using a laptop, could the “bug” currently infiltrating the network be her?*

– If that is the case....

Tamae grinned her teeth a little. She was supposed to have the skill as a human being to govern information. However, if the hacker who sneaked in the temporary current hidden camera network was indeed her, then her skill far surpassed her own.

*Did Izaya Orihara train her, or did he hire a human who has superior skills from the start?*

She was not sure which, but Tamae made a daring smile, reminding herself that she was not an opponent to never underestimate at the very least.

- Well, whatever.
- I don't know why you guys would pick a fight with us, but....
- I will teach you that the ones who will win in the end are the ones who outmatch in power.

As Tamae thought that to herself, there was movement on the monitor in the wheelchair seat. Ryuusei noticed it as well, furrowed his brows and muttered.

“Does he really plan on contacting him?”

The figures appearing on the screen with Izaya Orihara's group was Hiura's bodyguard and secretary who were in his office until just before the first inning.

“Well, let's go watch their abilities.”

Watching them match in pace and approach the young man in the wheelchair, Ryuusei regarded Hiura's actions as cautious and began to think of his own. Depending on the situation, they would probably would have to make their moves as well.

Without realizing that Izaya Orihara was a foreign matter that just happened to be in this stadium on coincidence and without any relation to the incident.

The ball deciding their fate proceeded to slowly roll along the fair line.

*On a certain national highway, in a taxi*

“And then! I said this! ‘Good heavens!’”

There was the cheerful voice of a woman in a personal taxi.

“Yeah, but this is just a second-hand telling. I heard it from an American couple who came to Japan for site seeing and made an imitation of them!”

“Ha, haa.....”

The taxi driver made a pathetic laugh as an agreeable response to the pretty girl sitting in the passenger's seat. However, he did not understand any of the content since he ignored his passenger's story. His gaze and focus were towards his rearview mirror where he could see the man sitting in the backseat.

The large man sat in the back seat bent over to accommodate his giant body. From the scars and glaring eyes that peak out under his bandages on his face

she felt like it would have been better to let a ghost on-board.

However what was more strange to the driver was the girl in the passenger seat talking to the monster-like man lightheartedly. He tilted his head wondering if she was just not frightened or she got used to outdoing everything, but he did not imagine that ‘the giant in the backseat was actually a kind man who merely frightened others by his appearance.’ Even if he tried to imagine that, that would still be a huge misunderstanding.

The bandaged man – Usubara – was a destroyer who had demolished most things including humans with his monstrous strength and durability, appropriately like a Frankenstein monster would. He did not know any means of communication other than destruction in general, and aside from the fact he did not know any other way to help someone, those traits were appealing to his employer. He had never lost a fight or a death match and was reigned as the ‘invincible man’ among residents in the mining town Bunokura. However, since the town itself was destroyed, he came to know defeat for the first time.

Densuke Sozoro and Izaya Orihara.

Usubara had been toyed by their hands, and in order to regain his identity and with a strong rage burning inside him he decided to crush Izaya and Sozoro.

He decided that, but –

“Alright, Ayumi-chan! There’s a lot of people who have brought their kids and family to the baseball stadium! You can’t get into a fight and cause trouble to those around you!”

He currently remembered another kind of sense of defeat.

When a certain bomb incident happened in Bunokura, Usubara was given credit for taking away the detonation switch from the female culprit. Although the credit was deserved, the immediate troubles that occurred were the only matters that came to his mind at the time, so Usubara himself could not remember the before and after events.

However, since he broke the arm of the woman when the detonation switch was taken, he received a stern lecture from Yuuki when she heard the circumstances of the story.



– “Since she had an explosive it was a super emergency situation, I won’t give complaints on the fact you hurt a girl. But, what’s with getting into a fight without thinking of the problems the people around you were having and throwing the injured girl!? That Orihara-kun kid is in the wrong, but you also have to reflect on that!”

Usubara did not have memory of this, but no matter the reason, and even though he was not particularly disciplined, he was shameful of the fact he broke some weak girl’s arm and knocked her down.

He was usually told by his employer Adamura, ‘just don’t do something like hitting a normal person who has never fought or some kid carrying a backpack. I may do it, but you must not. Beating down weak guys who pass by and don’t even put up a resistance will eventually lead to distorted pleasure. That would dull the sharpness of your violence.’ He planned to keep to that.

To him, the only people who treated him as a normal human were his recently deceased father and his employer Adamura. And then his step-mother riding with him in the taxi right now. With that fact in Usubara’s thin reasoning she was an existence he could not shake off. However –

“Still, that old man who caught the foul ball on TV just a bit ago is about as strong as you, right?”

After Usubara thought over his mother’s question momentarily, he accepted the comment as ‘about the same as’ rather than ‘more than him’ and nodded. She nodded back with a triumphant smile and answered innocently like a child.

“If so, then wouldn’t it be okay to go all out? Well, when I complain to the two of them, then what is left is to stretch out the fight in some spacious place and.....”

Usubara started to notice in the middle of his exchange with his step-mother in the taxi. The fact that his step-mother Yuuki, while she did not have a screw in her head, was rather disconnected from most things.

“And then, the last bit is to fight and make up! Then let’s have everyone go for hot pot!”

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# What Type of Person Is Izaya Orihara? (Himari's Case)

What's wrong, Isozaka-san? For you to start a conversation with me is pretty rare, but I hope it's not like you have a Lolita complex, right?

...It's a joke. Don't give me that look.

Anyway, what do you need?

...What do I think of Izaya Orihara?

That sort of thing, you should know I loathe him. He had to go and instigate my father...

No, this talk doesn't even matter anymore. It's already over.

Haruto cares for him. It probably would be better to say that he is brainwashed by him.

Izaya Orihara is not someone you can simply call a bad guy or good guy. He's just trouble. A walking trouble, a talking trouble, a living trouble. I think he is nothing more than an existence that cannot be helped, making the people around him meet a terrible fate. You say he occasionally does good things, but that's just someone else's misfortune that becomes someone else's happiness. So just like a typhoon, like a tornado, or like an earthquake. There is no way to avoid it, so you just quietly wait for it to pass.

...That's what I thought.

But I heard. From these two people called Mikage-san and Kine-san. That Izaya Orihara lost in the past. And that's why he ran away from Ikebukuro. I heard that was also when he got put in a wheelchair from serious wounds from that time.

At first, I didn't believe it. That some human was able to do that to Izaya Orihara. So I decided not to give up. I will learn how to be like him as I'm by his side. I will become Izaya Orihara. I will become Izaya Orihara, more than Izaya Orihara can. If I can do that, I can get away. Away from him, I can bring Haruto back to what he was before. Surely, our family, surely, again, with mother and

with...father.....

I'm sorry. Even though he's not here. Even though he's not here anymore.

I hate Izaya Orihara. I don't hate you, Isozaka-san, or Nec-san or any of you; although I would like you normally, I hate the two of you when you work with Izaya Orihara. I really hate how I ended up being taken in by him. But I cannot hate Haruto, I can't.

I'm, going to go now, alright?

Isozaka-san, you're not the dangerous type of person to enjoy seeing a girl cry, are you?

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### Translation Works:

1. Byakumaru is written as 白夜丸 which can mean "Full white night." The "maru" is still pretty common in names today, so I didn't think much of it, but during the Sengoku and Edo periods "maru" was usually given to young boys – typically feudal lords' kids or samurais' kids, at least someone of nobility or importance. Though the "maru" could be dropped later in life, since it indicates someone as "young."  
Keep in mind that "maru" does not always indicate nobility for people in real life now. Its meaning and usage has changed over the centuries. But for the fictional character, sure, it can be considered.
2. Zaibatsu – 財閥. Literally called a financial clique. They are large Japanese business conglomerates, which usually had such influence it could have control over parts of the Japanese economy. This was especially the case in the Meiji era and continued until WWII. They were not necessarily monopolies, as the companies would usually specialize in multiple industries.
3. Sadaharu Oh is a Japanese-Chinese baseball player for the Yomiuri Giants and currently holds the world home run record with 868 throughout his career. He also has various other batting records. If you love baseball, you can read more about him [here](#).
4. In Japan, there is one governor of a prefecture and one to four vice governors appointed by the governor. Hiura is one of the vice governors of

some prefecture.

5. Jersey 24 is referring to the character Enokida from the series Hakata Tonkotsu Ramens. He will also be referred to as blackleg nameko, which is his hacker name.
6. The term people refer to Ryuusei is 支配人 (shihainin), which means “manager” or “executive.” It is a stylistic choice of why I chose “executive” over manager, though there were legit reasons too. To me, the English word for “manager” is just too generalized. A manager could be anyone in charge of a small business to the head of a massive corporation. In comparison, the Japanese language has various words for “manager,” but each one is more specific to what type of manager they are and their position. Not to mention Ryuusei’s ego and he’s very influential/intimidating presence as well. There were plenty of reasons I had to translate it as “executive” over “manager.” But in a few instances like in this chapter, it made more sense to translate it as “manager” like in the dialogue between Iroha and Haruto.
7. Namusan 南無三 – I’m pretty sure that since Yuuki mentioned it was something she heard from an American couple, I believe this is a Baccano reference. I unfortunately do not know the series so well that I would know what Yuuki could have been talking to the American couple about or if that couple used the line “namusan.” So if I translated that differently, my apologies. It seems to be a nuance so it means something like “damn it,” “oh shoot,” or “oh my god.”



# 試合一時中断

# 三章

## Chapter 3: Game Suspension

### *In the Audience*

“You are Izaya Orihara-san, correct?”

The bespectacled woman who was the real embodiment of the secretary image called out to Izaya, who had been talking with Haruto in the wheelchair space.

Izaya Orihara came to this baseball stadium by complete coincidence.

Although he received the tickets, they were complimentary tickets for the unreserved seats regardless for the date, so he actually was unsure whether to go to the day game or night game until just previously.

Even so, the fact they knew his name, Izaya, meant they knew that information since the game had started through somehow. If there was any factor that could be thought of it would be natural to assume it was from Nec hacking into the wireless hidden camera network.

Sozoro stood there vigilant, while Nec was in the middle of soliloquizing, “did I miss something? No, there’s no way.” Izaya turned his head slightly and spoke to the secretary-like lady with a fearless look.

“My, that’s impressive. For you to look up even my name. I have been a bit idle, so I do not know your names.”

He returned the question with another question with an extremely and shamelessly worded attitude.

“So? The vice governor Hiura or the executive Ryuusei Takioka. Which one called for me?”

The secretary-like lady stiffened. However, it was only for a moment; perhaps she concluded the tactic was to get her stuck in the mud, and she quickly regained her wits and answered honestly.

“Vice governor Hiura would like to invite Izaya-sama for a meal.”

Izaya answered with a twisted grin.

“That sounds fine. I was just about hungry.”

And then he moved towards the older man, who was distancing himself from him and pretending he was a stranger, and called out to him with a cheerful tone among the roaring of the crowd.

“Sozoro saaaan! Sozoro-san, you are quite hungry too, right?”

Sozoro scowled in complete distaste hearing his voice, but Izaya continued on using phrasing that expressed *I won't let you get away*.

“It's not nice to have complete strangers push my wheelchair, so I ask you to push.”

“Really now, that wheelchair has a self-propelling function, if I recall correctly? I am sure you have utterly boasted it was a custom addition to the best foreign product.”

“It's to conserve the battery.”

Izaya recited back without a care his voice could have been blown away by the people's enthusiasm behind him.

“It's the same as the game. We don't know what will happen in the next move.”

“Is that not life?”

– That is....

Iroha could see the scene of a secretary-like woman and a well built man making contact with Izaya Orihara.

– Isn't that, vice governor's Hiura's?

*Why exactly are the secretary and bodyguard of the politician connected with her employer taking her target of observation?*

*No, since they are people concerned with it they took the position of observing the target.*

While she pondered on it as she watched them, an unknown voice from the audience called out to her.

“Heeeey, miss. One beer please!”

“Ah....Yes! Understood!”

She instantly switched to a sales smile and poured a beer from the portable beer server on her back for the audience member in the unreserved seat. And then after taking the payment, she whispered into the radio in a small voice as she moved away from that spot.

“This is B32. The target has made contact with the guest of the VIP seat.”

### *Ryuusei's Office*

Currently the blinds were covered, but one could watch the game from the office's window. However, it would be problematic to have someone look in from the outside, so the blinds mainly remained shut. Opening a gap in those blinds with his finger, Ryuusei gazed at a portion of the audience.

“I can't tell from the naked eye. Should I have trained my eyesight?”

Tamae had been deciphering the hidden camera data in the stadium when Ryuusei deprecated that and nodded to his comment in understanding.

“Really, it seems like that old man and the children are part of Izaya Orihara's group.”

On the video recording from the camera at the entrance there was a boy pushing the wheelchair and a girl standing beside him. And the footage showed the figure of the old man walking a bit ahead of them.

“The woman with the laptop....it seems she came in much later.”

“Does that mean she tampered with those security cameras in that span of time?”

“They were tampered with much earlier. About half a day's footage was switched out.”

“Then the possibility of the actual culprit being that woman is?”

Tamae quietly shook her head.

“I can't quiet say that. First, Amagi-san was originally off for today...We could narrow it down if we knew the approximate time of death, but that's impossible, right?”



“Yeah, to completely solve that would take time.”

Ryuusei then commented as though he just thought of it.

“By the way, while it’s the main method used to cremate the bodies, did you know the chemicals they use in dramas are actually weaker than the optimum chemicals?”

“My, I didn’t see much drama so I didn’t know.”

“It’s the same superstition as putting chloroform to someone’s face to make them sleep. If by chance the idiot mimics it, he prepares the trap for a certain blunder. The foolish criminals are simply manipulated by that and walk a tragic road. According to the prepared script by the creators that is.”

Moving away from the blinds, Ryuusei continued his explanation further as he watched the footage from the hidden cameras displayed on the monitor.

“Those viewers who watch simple TV dramas create the illusion that they have controlled that piece of information and are thus contrarily the ones who are manipulated. Honestly, it’s hilariously pathetic, but it can’t be helped. There is a clear delineation between the ones who manipulate and the ones who are manipulated from the start.”

The men around them and Tamae did not provide a rhetoric to him as he was working himself up. Although it was a different introduction than usual, they refrained from speaking since they knew from this point out it would be a subject they have heard plenty of times over before.

“What is that delineation? That’s right, it’s respect! But there are many guys who don’t know whether there is enough respect for something! There’s too many! Even though there is no more clear of an answer!”

Ryuusei paced the room exaggeratedly with a theatrical tone. He was unusually worked up, but his sister and guards already grew used to it and continued to listen to Ryuusei’s shouts without a care.

“Is it respect for the directors or scriptwriters who put in the tricks for the audience? Or is it respect for the novelists or mangaka who wrote the original work? Or is it respect for the sponsors who put out money?”

The man called the 'executive' slammed down his feet and yelled.

"No! No! All of them are wrong!"

And then he declared to himself and the 'place' he stood at itself.

"The one who should receive respect is the theater."

He placed both hands on his office desk and further framed his wording as he glared at the hidden camera footage displayed on the screen.

"The bundle of paper written with the passages. In the frame of the television screen. The internet, a web of information repeating the passion and flood of comments. The outdoor stage where the singing voices resound and the spreading woods around it. The stadium unraveling the drama called the game!"

Whether he was swept away by his emotions, he spread both his arms wide towards the ceiling and yelled.

"We can dance on this tragicomedy called life because everything has the stage – the theater! Life becomes so beautiful because there is production set on the stage! The earth, the world, and human society are, after all, its foundation! It's nothing more than the foundation for building the theater. The space created carrying that clear purpose can grant happiness to people. Isn't that right?"

"You're right. Quite so, brother."

Tamae answered, but there was no deep emotion in her voice.

All the male bodyguards looked at each others' faces.

Their simple thoughts were:

– Really, what's wrong with the executive.

It was such a straightforward thought.

However, not one person spoke up.

It was disconcerting to think of the man making those statements in a non-acting theatrical manner as their employer, but at the same time they were aware. It was because he had this picky personality that he soaked his hands in

crime and stood out among the Natsugawara group, clamored with ruffians at his side.

However, at the same time people who knew Ryuusei have felt unease. Ryuusei did not doubt he was the executive. His conduct backed by that self confidence was his weapon, but there were no brakes for his ambitions either. Eventually when there is a wall or a cliff he could not break through with sheer horse power an extravagant disaster would likely occur.

However, Ryuusei's eyes did not have even a shred of uncertainty in them. His eyes shone with the hatred towards his enemies and the pride that he was the absolute executive of the stadium he called a 'theater.'

And now he changed the monitor screen to the camera footage of the inside of the VIP room Hiura was in. The room had a special material to capture sound and sprinklers installed in the wall paintings and ceiling, making it so a guest would mistaken it as 'the perfect privacy room' at first glance. The conversations in the room were entirely kept within its walls, which should not be in the VIP room by any standard. But Ryuusei installed the same kind of cameras in all the VIP rooms since 'it was with respect to the theater and special guests.'

No matter what fundamental change the word 'respect' became to him, there was no one who could resist Ryuusei maintaining his dictatorship with those values of his.

It was because they understood.

When the dictator created the 'theater' – the Summer Tile Stadium – they also have done a fair amount of dirty work and enjoyed the benefits that came from it. Furthermore, betraying him would bring nothing more than him wringing their necks.

The man had put collars on his subordinates from the early days of him making his climb up the hillside road steadily. And now he had managed to create this enormous baseball stadium from the ground up by the ones shackled in those chains.

To expand his *theater* in accordance to his ambition now – he peaked into the deep abyss even more and tried to utilize everything.

Understanding fully well the other had been looking back long ago.

### *VIP Room*

“I’ll give you forewarning, but this room is likely under surveillance by Takioka-kun. I recommend speaking here with that in mind.”

Ranzou Hiura mentioned foremost instead of providing his name.

The man sitting in the wheelchair returned him a daring smile.

“Yes, I am aware. I feel there is one behind that painting and one in each of the sprinklers on the ceiling. The sprinklers have microphones in them, so the conversation we are having right now like this is certainly being overheard by executive Takioka.”

Along with that fearless smile, the man in the wheelchair informed him that *he knew the position of the cameras, meaning he intervened with the baseball stadium’s hidden system not accessible to the public.*

– What is he thinking diving into enemy territory while aware of everything?

– Does he plan on taking the position for a negotiation?

“So? I don’t think it’s necessary for us to introduce ourselves to each other.....but first, how about you tell me what you plan to do? Izaya Orihara-kun. What is your aim?”

Hiura had asked as though probing for an answer. The young man in the wheelchair reminded with a ridiculing smile.

“Naturally it’s for the meal. You invited me to this room for that. After all, I cannot think a vice governor would call for one guest and lie about that.”

“.....You’re a cheeky kid. Maybe a good match with Takioka.”

“It’s quite an honor to be compared to the baseball team manager who rules this wonderful stadium.”

“Fine then. We can have this place’s chef make something. It’ll take time for it to arrive, so you can enjoy it.”

### *A Passage for Staff Use*

Receiving an urgent call, Iroha Mayuzumi cut herself from the beer server,

separated herself from the audience seats and returned to the staff's personal space audience members could not enter in. The chief of the sales department was aware she had a special position, so they did not particularly mention anything other than briefly glancing over to her even when she dropped off the beer server and took off. They just thought, 'I guess another troublesome guest found a fault over something and is making a ruckus,' so they focused on their own duties since it had nothing to do with them and called for other salespeople specialized in the division.

Even the ones who noticed the suspicious happenings in the underbelly of this baseball stadium especially were not willing to look far into the matter. For their own peace of mind they just simply handled the job given to them. All the same, they did not realize Iroha was involved in matters to the level of absconding people or of disposing their bodies.

– This is the worst. Will I have to finish that guy Izaya Orihara?

She gave a small sigh as she briskly walked the backyard.

The *third investigation division* carried murder and kidnappings numerous times in the past. Her role was mainly leading the target to where they needed to be or cleaning up the bodies, so she had not directly conducted murder.

However, she had the confidence she could kill her opponent if the order was given without fail. After all, she had killed people many times over before she was employed by Takioka since her early childhood.

She was originally a discarded child picked up by an underground organization and was instilled with various techniques and readiness to perform *this work* in practice.

She had killed people from underground organizations that opposed her foster father numerous times in order to guarantee her survival, but around the time she was fifteen years old she was sold off by her adoptive father.

To the financier overflowing with ambition, Ryuusei Takioka.

He seemed to have gathered people who would carry out his dirty work, so Iroha was a good pawn for him to use as he pleased as she did not even have a family registry. She was given the alias as Iroha Mayuzumi, but that name was

bought from another person. She had met the woman who arranged her registry, Kujiragi, but it was said she also was using another person's name. As such she thought there must be surprisingly more people like her than she expected.

As a result of receiving *training to blend in with the general public* after a year separated from her foster father, she was able to adapt herself in human society enough to be thought as one of them.

Indeed, she adapted.

And so while there was no hesitation to do dirty work she would feel vacant after it was over. There were many times she questioned herself when she worked as a salesgirl watching the audience members switching between joy to sorrow during games if it was truly alright for an existence like hers to be among them.

However, unable to find any other way of living, she idly spent her life as 'Iroha Mayuzumi', a life bought from another person.

Since she had not killed anyone directly, she could not ascertain if her skills have dulled or not. Incidentally, her foster father who raised her was indeed a killer and seemed to have once been a boss of an organization, but it was said that he was impoverished in a dispute with an organization in Fukuoka and in the end was finished by an even better skilled, well-known killer.

– What kind of killer was the guy who killed my father?

– Niwa.....Niwa.....?

– Was it 'Naniwa samurai?'.....But if that's the case, that'd be Osaka.

She did not seem to care who the adversary of her foster father was, but rather she held a philosophical stance on life and death to the extent she considered 'it can't be helped if he died.'

Although, in other areas a portion of a human-like heart was nurtured.

– It's about 90% impossible for the elderly man, but would I be able to kill Izaya Orihara?

As she was thinking those thoughts plainly, she recalled the boy she ran into

earlier.

- But, I don't want to make children cry.

- For Izaya Orihara to be able to have an eye on the executive even though he brings those children around with him.

- He's probably not a decent person.

She headed towards the private locker room to change while thinking over the matter. Removing her jacket, the rising muscles in her tensed back became visible.

With enough muscle strength to carry a close to twenty kilogram full beer serving container for long periods of time without trouble and a body type of that of a model with a balance of both feminine lines and slenderness, one could see she was *created* like that by her training during her early childhood.

Iroha, not realizing that her sculpture-like body was unique, covered that skin in a new outfit with agile hands.

- It's been a while since I've worn this.

Among the techniques for infiltration she had learned to sneak around within the baseball stadium efficiently, this was especially unique. It was for carrying out a certain service job in a VIP room, but she was relatively pleased with that work.

It was because the white and black basis of the work clothes calmed her wavering heart.

### *VIP Room*

"Soon the meal will be served. The game is still at mid-way. You should take your time and enjoy it."

As Hiura spoke he looked over at the ground field to see the match coming near its fourth inning. However as Izaya gazed at the barrier of the glass window, he recalled a sense of unease different from just a while ago. It was a slight change, but for him who bragged about loving people, it was a detail he could not miss.

"It seems the enthusiasm has died down a bit."

“Yeah, it’s because Munakata’s four consecutive home runs have been hindered.”

“I see. I haven’t noticed that.”

Izaya was focusing on his conversation with Nec when the third home run was hit, so he did not really follow what was happening with the game. Once, there was a moment he felt the audience’s voices of despondency, but since he prioritized the information Nec was providing him than that, he did not know that the Munakata player did not deliver on his great exploits.

– Yes, after waiting for so long and coming all the way to the baseball stadium only to see his great exploits unaccomplished, how would the people who support him think? Even though they came all this way to support him, would they feel disheartened or would they lose their spirits at the thought that “perhaps they lost because I came to watch?” I wonder which. Surprisingly there may be more of the latter.

He considered the people who thought their team lost when they watched the live stream.

– For those people who watch it live everyday, I would like to see the different reactions when their team has won or lost. Yeah, I want to see what type of expression they would give when their team has consecutive defeats.

Izaya bowed his head in deep thought of such trivial things, but whether it was mistaken as complicated emotions towards baseball, Hiura spoke up as he watched the player enter the batting box.

“The Natsugawara Serpents are a newcoming young, inexperienced team compared to the Giants or the Lions. And thus along with teamwork, a star to pull the flow of the match is necessary. Munakata has qualities of a star, but to repaint the world’s awareness some other kind of pressing impact is needed.”

“Even if you caused a drug or a gambling incident, you wouldn’t be able to repaint the world’s awareness though?”

“You’re a man who proposes disagreeable ideas. You don’t say anything like, ‘how about bringing support to the baseball stadium’. Do you hate sportsmen?”

Hiura remarked with a click of his tongue. Izaya shrugged his shoulders back



and replied simply.

“Not really, it’s just that no matter what situation the player finds himself in, I will not abandon him. Whether he hits a 30 consecutive home run, manages a perfect game single handedly, gets two outs from hitting fly balls, or strays from the path of glory by getting involved with gambling or drugs while on active duty, to me it is all just one side the players show me as humans. I love it. Hurrray for baseball.”

“I understand very well that you are making fun of baseball.”

“This was before I was born, but the big controversy over the contract made from the hole in the draft conference’s system on the ‘vacant day’ was the best, wasn’t it? Ahh, why was I not born at that time? Why was I not alive to see the faces of the people involved is regret-”

“That’s enough.”

Just as he cut off Izaya, there was a knock at the door.

“Excuse me. The meal is here.”

It was the voice of a young woman.

“Alright, come in.”

Behind him the door opened, but Izaya continued to face towards the window regardless of it. And he continued to watch with a loving look at the audience and players’ shifts between joy and sorrow.

What the audience embraced in their hearts during real time was the anticipation of the attack or defense for their supporting teams. Put simply, the result that appeared shortly following one turn at the bat.

Whether it may be when the white ball land in the fairground or outside track, or a home run or dead ball. There were various sequences of events, but the people who support the winner and the people who support the loser all expose their emotions at the same time.

Izaya loved the moment where these opposing emotions swirled together.

If it was possible, he wished not only for the unreasonable but for unsavory preferences as well. Whether they were the cheering supporters of both teams

were just half and half, or to see the joys and sorrows of the spectators' alternating expressions otherwise not shown in the diamond vision screen.

And then there was a voice right at his side.

"Excuse me. What cocktail would you like me to make?"

Realizing the voice addressed him, Izaya glanced at the girl who brought the food for the first time –

He tensed as if the air caught in his throat.

"?"

His expression did not change, but clearly seeing Izaya's entire form stiffen up, Iroha Mayuzumi, now changed into a bartender uniform, tilted her head in earnest.

– Ah, this is an amazing opportunity.

– If it was now, I could usually kill him, but...

Looking at the elder man's face standing next to him, she discarded the immediate thought.

– Ah, it's no good.

– Before I could slit Izaya Orihara's throat with a knife, the bones in my neck would be broken first.

The moment she imagined finishing her target, the form of the butler-like elderly man intervening and breaking her neck with nothing more than his own bare hands came to mind.

– I guess it really is not possible for me.

Izaya Orihara's bodyguard – Densuke Sozoro – did not necessarily release any killing intent or pressure. To the normal person they would only be able to see that he may have completely hidden his true skill, but to Iroha's senses it told her he was more than abnormal. But not realizing her own abilities she started to think she just could not go up against him.

"? Is something wrong? You're looking pale."

Seeing how Izaya turned an unsettling color the moment he looked at the

waitress's face, Hiura called out to him with doubt.

At that, Izaya returned to himself and shook his head with his usual smile.

"Eh? Yes, sorry about that. It is nothing serious. I just have a bit of a trauma with bartender uniforms."

"How would a trauma form from a bartender uniform...?"

"Hahaha, well, it's fine, isn't it?"

He smiled as though to deceive him, and then Izaya looked back to the girl wearing the bartender uniform.

"Alright, I don't need any alcohol. An oolong tea in a cocktail style would do."

"Understood."

The girl respectfully bowed and left to one of the bar counters in the room. While watching her depart, Hiura spoke.

"You won't drink?"

"It's a cowardly trait. I don't have the courage to put alcohol in my body after diving into such a dangerous place."

"So you had the sense of danger then...However, it's really nothing more than a VIP room. It's not like anything dangerous is prepared at the bar counter in this room."

"Yes, but the big party rooms for karaoke boxes in Ikebukuro are like that too, you know?"

Izaya had completely regained his composure and moved his wheelchair to the side of the sofa. Then taking the cocktail glass with the Oolong tea in it, he raised it in Hiura's direction.

"To the prosperity of the prefecture."

Continuing, he said one phrase, moving his glass towards the hidden camera in the picture frame.

"Praying for the Serpent's victory. Cheers."

"He made fun of us. Does that mean he's confident?"

The edges of Ryuusei's mouth curved up into a light smile as he watched Izaya giving a toast through the hidden camera. Despite the expression shown on his lips, his eyes were not smiling.

"Does he think we can't do anything? ...Does he not notice that if I give Mayuzumi the order she would pierce his heart or head with an ice pick?"

"Actually, wasn't there a murder by the name Ice Pick Thompson?"

Tamae connected her brother's statement with that, mentioning the American urban legendary killer.

"Yeah, he was quite something. The culprit has been unknown right to the very end. It was called the American version of Jack the Ripper. The criminal probably did fine work. But if he was a murderer who did it for purely business and not pleasure he'd have full marks."

"What do you mean?"

"If he really was another human controlling the stage of a murder play, then he wouldn't have been able to cause the cases themselves unless it was a distorted hobby. That's right, what's important is what to show the audience and what not to show. The one whose in the position to make that decision is someone who can truly move the theater."

"I see, you're right, nii-san."

There was not much of a true *I see* from her heart, but deciding that saying something to Ryuusei when he was worked up was meaningless she settled on saying that lightly. In another matter, she managed to gather outside information and tried to understand the human Izaya Orihara.

"...That man Izaya Orihara, it seems he got into trouble a while back. He was a member of the color gang, the Dollars...and this is just the city's rumors, but it seems he had stabbed a classmate with a knife during middle school."

"Hmmm, In short, he's just scum then."

Ryuusei snorted, but in truth he also was weary of the man Izaya Orihara.

*Wouldn't it the safest place for him be in the audience seating where anyone can see him?*

Whether the plan succeeded or failed, he thought Izaya Orihara would have mixed himself in the waves of people returning home when the game ended and disappear, but he did not actually expect him to have readily accept vice governor Hiura's invitation.

"What is he thinking? What is his aim? Why is he with children..."

After Ryuusei suddenly halted where he stood he gave Tamae an instruction.

".....Tamae, can I ask you one favor?"

"What is it, nii-san?"

"It seems the conversation between Izaya Orihara and vice governor Hiura will end smoothly soon, so can you go to the wheelchair space and bring those children here? The reason for it will be.....'Izaya Orihara-oniichan called for you,' is probably good enough."

"My, do you plan on putting me in the play? Is it alright if it's not right away?"

"Yeah, as soon as the discussion is over, there is a possibility vice governor Hiura will finish Izaya Orihara."

Tamae's words were mixed with sarcasm, but Ryuusei told his sister with a smile from the depths of his heart.

"There was an opening, so I've made Mayuzumi part of the cast.....I await for your performance, Tamae."

### *In the Audience*

At the wheelchair space Izaya left from. Currently there was Nec sitting on the pipe chair for attendants use, Haruto looking around aimlessly, and Himari standing there taking a philosophical stance.

"Hey, Nec-oneechan. Where did Izaya-san go?"

"Hell. To hell. Hee hee."

Haruto was bewildered at Nec's upfront answer.

"Izaya-san is a good person so he shouldn't go to hell! .....Ah, I see! He went down the thread like Shakyamuni right!"

".....You really know that story well, huh."

While admiring the occasional and strange broadening direction of Haruto's knowledge, Himari moved her gaze over to the VIP seat in one of the stadium's corners. Since it was far away she could not see with the naked eye, but she almost felt like something was squirming over there. She took out the opera glasses she bought with the change Izaya gave her earlier, and it slowly came into focus.

"Ahhh! Himari-chan, you bought that!? That's so neat!"

Himari watched the scene through the magnified glass while Haruto was being envious of her from the side. And then in one of the noticeably large windows above the seats newspaper reporters were she was able to confirm the figure she saw seemed to be Sozoro.

– So there.

– Seriously, if he is our protector, he should watch over Haruto until the end.

Himari then spoke to Nec, while muttering complaints in her mind.

"Are you still looking into something?"

"Hmmm? Well, I guess. I think that there's a lot of disappearing reporters and yakuza around this guy Takioka."

"If you do such dangerous activities, then Nec-oneechan will also be killed and fall into hell."

"Hee hee. Probably. But I can't stop it. I wonder if this is how it feels for people who don't stop smoking even when they're told they'll fall ill from it."

Nec shrugged her shoulders as she sat with her knees drawn to her chest on the pipe seat and told Himari as though boasting – no, she certainly told her just to purely boast.

"Look, this is the data left by the writer who pursued Takioka and a politician's collusion. Various data was left on the cloud. There's a treasure load of information like information aside from Takioka and even dangerous information on the politician. It's amazing."

".....Why are you showing me?"

"Even if I show Haruto-kun he'll just say 'I don't really get it' or 'that's

amazing!’”

“What is it? What are you talking about?”

Haruto, hearing his name mentioned, peaked over at Nec’s laptop from behind.

“Look, there’s a lot of articles from people that are probably dead!”

“Heeeh~! I don’t really get it, but that’s amazing, Nec-oneechan!”

Haruto said the exact words Nec predicted with a smile. And just like that, Haruto exclaimed ‘Ah! It’s Munakata’s turn!’ and took off to the front of the unreserved seats.

Himari watched his back and hufed out a sigh before glaring at Nec with plain eyes.

“So? Is it fun exposing dead people’s secrets?”

“It’s the best. Hee hee.”

Nec said in response and collected *data owned by missing people involved with Takioka* one after the other on her laptop screen.

Naturally she could look at data from disposed PCs after their death or their PCs that could not accept any external connections without any power supply or radio waves, but the mail data left on the server or organization’s network attached to it was similar to finding a mountain of hidden treasure lying in a lost sunken ship to Nec.

The name Nec was an alias she gave herself, but its origins were that of nicknames created by fellow hackers long ago.

She specialized in finding articles of the deceased on the net and dealing it as her own. This included e-mail addresses, credit cards or electronic money, and the data on the cloud service of the recently deceased humans. Her special skill was utilizing things that have not undergo the procedures for death or the remaining unrelated matters from those countless data and accounts making one think the dead came back and are continuing activities on the net.

The hackers could not grasp Nec’s identity, but they realized this was likely being done by one person and thus called her *Necromancer and Necrophilia*;

some admired her, some feared her, some bore hostility towards her, and some became fans of hers. However, she herself rejected the name as it was 'not cute long,' and she took the name Nec and continued her activities.

Then one day, she decided to fish for the data left by a man called 'Izaya Orihara.' He was an urban-like legendary information broker based in Ikebukuro and Shinjuku.

Nec, hearing he was done in by a Russian killer, dived deep and even deeper into the sea of the internet to find a large amount of data on him quickly. But from there, a certain trouble swooped down upon her. And that was her first defeat she had experienced.

Shinichi Tsukumoya.

She knew he was a columnist who released numerous books related to the Tokyo city under that name, but he was a mysterious hacker with not one piece of information released about him. She had tried to infiltrate the data server Izaya Orihara managed but took a magnificent counter attack from the man which completely destroyed her laptop system.

She thought it could easily be fixed, but each data was left with a strange passage in text: 'Sorry, miss. This is a job I received from him. But with this I can finally take it over. Ah, that's right. My name is Shinichi Tsukumoya. Don't misunderstand, Izaya Orihara does not have this much competence.'

– I was toyed with.

In front of the truth that a far superior hacker lead her around by the nose, mercifully made it easy to restore the data, and moreover gave his name to put her down, Nec regrettably wrapped herself up in a blanket and continued to cry herself to sleep.

Several months later, one day she thought to regain her footing and start her activities again when there was a knock on the door of her house.

*Have the police finally come?*

Since Tsukumoya contrarily infiltrated her she was prepared for it, but the one in front of the opened door was one man who sat in a wheelchair.



– ‘Hey. You’re pretty amazing. I received the e-mail from Tsukumoya of the general situation, but you completely lost everything in a blink of an eye because of me.’

– ‘It’s important to have connections. If you feel you are not an expert, then you should just become friends with genuine experts. Well, when I bring this up Tsukumoya will probably reply, ‘I don’t recall her becoming friends with you.’

That man was called Izaya Orihara. She thought he just died, but apparently he was saved from almost certain death.

– ‘I heard you are called a Necromancer.’

– ‘There is a rumor going around that I’m already dead, but with my corpse.....don’t you feel like starting a business using my remaining data?’

Nec reminisced over the past before continuing to fish for more data. At the same moment in the corner of her laptop screen the footage from the hidden camera was displayed.

– Seriously. Since he jumped into hell, he’s quite an abnormality, that Izaya.

The statement she told Haruto previously was not even a metaphor. No matter how one could look at it, accepting an invitation from someone who knew they peaked into the place of murder was similar to going in for suicide. It was strange for her not to be taken as she has the laptop, but perhaps they planned to let her off the hook.

– Do they not think I would expose the footage of the cleanup of the body on the net during this time?

– Well I won’t do something that boring anyway.

She carried on with her work while chuckling to herself, and then she happened upon a certain data. It was the article data left by a freelance writer who pursued Takioka. And in there were countless appropriate files as *evidence*.

– Bingo.

– Now then, what should I do? I guess I’ll leave it for Izaya and probably send an e-mail to Isozaka.

- What will Izaya feel like doing with this?
- Actually, I think after treading on such events, it'll without a doubt first become a course accompanied with the Tokyo Bay concrete tour.
- Well, whatever. When that happens I will use his data (corpse) nicely....
- As according to our contract when Tsukumoya took over his work. Kee hee hee.

### *VIP Room*

“Now then, the meal is just about done, so how about we return to continuing the negotiations?”

The game on the ground was coming to its sixth inning already. The Serpent's progress was alternating back and forth. It was a close game with the opposing team, demodulating a lot of the voltage of the audience.

“Really now, were we negotiating? That's a first for me.”

Izaya replied back with a smile towards Hiura who was holding a knife and fork.

“Then let's start from here on out. Izaya Orihara-kun. Who is backing you?”

“There isn't anyone...is what I want to say, but since I'm just an ordinary informant, if I have to say someone then the one hiring me would be the human backing me...is what that will mean.”

“Is that so. If that's the case, this will be quick.”

Hiura made the sofa creak roughly and told the young man sitting in the wheelchair while giving a fake smile.

“You see, I'm saying I'll mediate for you.”

“A mediator, you say?”

“Yes. I don't know if you realize it, but you are currently standing on thin ice. On top of that, it's a layer of ice above boiling magma. It wouldn't be strange when it melts.”

“Now for that I'm at a loss whether I should be freezing or sweating.”

“Hand me all the information you have on the current case. I won’t do anything bad to you, and I could persuade Takioka so you all can gain profits.”

Hearing Hiura’s words fairly stated, Izaya looked up at the sprinklers above them and answered.

“I see, I see. That is truly an appreciated proposal. However...”

“Is there something you disapprove of?”

“For you to be able to decide the entirety of my treatment and business from here on out, vice governor Hiura, you already are seizing the initiative for *that matter*, are you not?”

“.....”

Izaya continued further as Hiura fell in silent.

“To begin with, the business partners for *that matter* is not just you, correct? Could newcomers like us step into there?”

Iroha Mayuzumi had also heard the conversation from the back counter and felt an unsettling atmosphere at Izaya’s behavior.

– That matter, he says.....

– Does that mean this man Izaya Orihara is trying to get involved with *that*?

– I thought he wasn’t just a normal person, but just what big organization is backing him.....?

– Then that elderly man may be an extremely skilled professional killer or something sent from that organization.....

– He’s probably that incredible of an existence for him to not get killed and remain alive to that age .

On the other hand, Sozoro desperately endured not showing his shock on his face.

– He’s an unbelievable man.

– What is with this ‘that matter?’ Still not knowing one thing about anything, he can give such an impressive bluff.

– Hm?

– That bartender girl is looking over here....She doesn't have any killing intent right now.

– Just previously there was a bit of malice, but the fact she drew back in earnest would simply mean she was testing us though.....now then.

By observing how the beer salesgirl distributed her walk and her focused gaze, Sozoro saw that she was some kind of professional fighter from his past experiences. And from the fact she appeared dressed in a bartender uniform this time, he deduced that it was probable the baseball stadium side had put surveillance on Izaya, or that she was a killer given the order to kill him, and so he remained vigilant.

– Although, what a sad world this is for someone like her to be wrapped in an air as though she has murdered countless people even though she is younger than Miss Nec.

Without knowing both of their reciprocal assessments, Izaya continued discussing the *negotiation without knowing the contents* fluently.

“First, there's no guarantee. The moment we open all our cards, you may decide ‘now we can dispose of them’ and the bodyguard-san over there could pull a gun out on us. When I think of that possibility, I'm afraid I cannot reveal that information.”

“Even if we did not speak anything here, you don't think we would pull out a gun?”

“If such an unfortunate accident occurs, in the case that I die the information of what you did in 1996 would only be leaked out to the world.”

Hiura's brow twitched at that. What Izaya mentioned was the date in the tax evasion document Nec previously showed him. It was a complete bluff, but he immediately responded to the mentioned date and a warped emotion ran through his mind.

“...I see, does that mean you want a shot at me? So you came to this baseball stadium knowing I was having the exchange for *that* here today.”

“Please answer my question. How deeply involved are you in *that*?”

“...What I am dealing is only *stage design* and *props*. I’m not dealing with *lighting* and *extras*. I have no plan on being a heretic.”

The conversation had a bit of out-of-place terms mixed in, but Izaya did not take any care at all to that as though he comprehended all the meanings of them and added.

“Haha, even by just pretending to look or not look at the *lighting* and *extras* is enough to be called a heretic.”

“You bastard...”

“Naturally, I’m also a heretic. Us heretics may get along, and there is a high possibility for us to establish business.”

At that he cut off, looked up at the sprinklers on the ceiling a second time, or more precisely the camera lens and bugs installed in there, and stated.

“Well, that’s if the executive of this stadium is a human who has generosity to grant us.”

*Ryuusei’s Office*

“.....Now he says it. With the position of a filthy murderer.”

Ryuusei made a bold smile as he uttered that completely blinded of himself.

“Did this guy have the same attitude when he was dealing with the Asuki group?”

The bodyguard who formally belonged to the Asuki group and pointed out Izaya’s existence in the first place was the one who asked that question.

“Yes, on the surface he is polite but with an expression as though he is initially looking through us.....he gave the impression like the world all moves to his will, and with him being this audacious kid even among other members his reputation was not well standing. Perhaps he also gave that impression when he changed jobs with the Awakusu group.”

Ryuusei heard what his subordinate stated and shook his head after letting out a suppressed laugh.

“Generosity....I have generosity he says? Of course I have that!”

And then he declared, glaring at Izaya displayed on the monitor.

“But, Izaya Orihara. You are no good. Testing people is an act of doubting your opponent’s dignity. There is no respect, you just gave proof yourself you are a monster playing as a normal human being.”

Ryuusei shook his head while listing off ridiculous reasons.

“There’s no way we can put a monster on our stage. If you become the monster that killed my precious, precious subordinate Amagi than it’s more so. Furthermore, that’s in spite of the fact of him trying to trample on our dignity with that kind of threatening manner.”

And then Ryuusei informed his subordinates as he fixed his tie.

“Well, alright then. If you spit on your master, let’s see if we can tame the beast in the end.”

“As according to my script, if he can shoot down that butler friend of his or the kids, there’s nothing you don’t use him for.”

*VIP Room*

“Now then, thank you for the meal. It was an honor sharing this experience with you. Vice governor Hiura.”

“.....Isn’t the discussion still not finished?”

Izaya shook his head at Hiura’s attempt to keep him here.

“It is unfortunate, but from this point on we cannot continue forward without executive Takioka here, correct?”

“Well that is true, but...”

“Well, it will be fine if executive Takioka gives an answer by the ninth inning I suppose. Besides, I have to make various calls on my end too.”

Hiura nodded, that being a natural course of action.

“When we meet later, I hope you will give the name of your employer.”

And then as he observed the young man in the wheelchair as though with

admiration he said this.

“However, it’s strange. I have mistaken you as the top of the organization that is trying to get involved with us since you are so imposing.”

“No way.”

Izaya made a sneering smile and stroked the arm of his wheelchair.

“I am just an informant. I move according to the will of my employer, nothing more than a humble puppet.”

“Nonetheless, do you feel like carrying out the contents of that threatening letter?”

A letter with a threat.

Sozoro immediately stopped from pushing Izaya’s wheelchair when he heard that term for the first time. *Even for Izaya it should be information he heard for the first time, but what does he plan on doing?* While Sozoro was wondering that, Izaya Orihara returned a shameless answer with his usual expression.

“Who knows? On the chance I sent that letter, do you think I would say ‘I sent it, but since we already put negotiations on the table I won’t follow through with it?’”

“I guess that would be right. I asked a stupid question.”

“Yes, myself, you and the executive. We don’t know anything. There is no threatening letter, and no incident happened in the underground warehouse. That will be fine? Right?”

“You’re a shrewd man.”

Hiura spat out that comment with both scorn and praise. On the other side, Sozoro acknowledged in his heart that Izaya was ‘without a doubt a ridiculous swindler.’ He held onto the thought that perhaps the true character for this man who showed no impatience and managed to converse with the other about a term he heard for the first time without struggling at all could be something different from most people. Whether Izaya knew Sozoro’s train of thought or not, he had the wheelchair self-propel itself forward and left the VIP room, giving a strong wave to the vice governor.

“Now then, let’s meet again soon.”

“Hey, bring him back to his previous seat.”

“Yes, sir.”

The male bodyguard nodded and walked in front of Izaya and Sozoro.

“Now really, I don’t need your concern, you know?”

Hiura shook his head.

“It’s nothing to worry about. It would be problematic if you accidentally went into another room. Mutually.”

That meant, ‘we’re watching you so behave.’ Sensing that they did not trust a single thing about himself, Izaya softly smiled as though content with that and from atop the wheelchair gave Hiura a bow.

“I suppose that as well. Now then, with thanks.”

And like this the racoon and the fox finished their first probing of each other. With neither of the two=clearly not grasping what game they were scrambling for or if they could make a united front.

If there was any difference between the two-then Izaya Orihara was the only one enjoying this aimless situation to its fullest.

*In the Audience*

“Hey you two, can I have a moment?”

“Okay! What is it?”

“...”

When Tamae called out to them, the boy came over with an innocent smile and the girl looked over suspiciously and stood still.

– These are the children....right?

Tamae tilted her head to the side wondering if these two were the ones she saw on the monitors of the hidden cameras. When there was a night game on a Sunday, there were never many children in the baseball stadium.

– Besides, where is that gothic woman?



– When I checked the hidden cameras earlier she was here...

She heard her brother's voice come through the earphone communication device she wore on her right ear.

[Orihara has left the VIP room. Hurry up. You can go through the B4 passageway.]

Hearing that voice, Tamae showed a bit of irritation. But she immediately wiped that from her expression, and at the same time she confirmed these two in front of her are her targets she invited them.

“You two are children Izaya Orihara-san brought here, right? ...Izaya Orihara-san has called for you, but would it be alright if you two come with me?”

She said the undisguised words meant as the *kidnapping trick* warned about in elementary school. Naturally, the girl plainly gave a doubtful look, but the boy nodded with undoubtedly, sparkling eyes.

“Is that true?! I'll go now! Himari-chan, let's go together, okay?”

“.....There's no way we should go.”

“Eeh!? Why!?”

“If Izaya-san was calling for us, he wouldn't use other people, and more importantly you are not the same person as that woman with glasses that came to Izaya-san previously.....”

The girl listed off those reasons, suspicious of her. Tamae let out a sigh, ‘*yeah that would be right,*’ and with a gentle smile she took a step towards Himari.

“You're a smart kid, aren't you? If that's the case, I wonder if this is more effective.”

And then when she drew closer to her face and showed her from the lining of her sleeves – a small hand gun hung from there – she whispered to her with a calm gaze.

(If you don't come quietly, I'll shoot that little boy friend of yours.)

*In front of the baseball stadium, Summer Tile Road*

At a shopping zone in front of the baseball stadium lined with ticket counters,

souvenir shops, and stores selling baseball team goods. And at the end of that a mother-and-child pair got off at a taxi platform.

“We arrived sooner than I expected! It didn’t even take an hour!”

“....”

“We did it, Ayumi-chan! We can also take our time and watch the game, don’t you think?”

Usubara tilted his head to the side at his step-mother’s comment as though she already forgot their objective before glaring up at the opening domed shaped baseball stadium that was more than ten times the height of his own gigantic size. Izaya Orihara and Densuke Sozoro were here. At the very least, it was certain they were here at the first inning.

“.....”

Thinking of when his revenge will be dispelled, Usubara had a natural smile form on his face. It was a smile by a simple boundless incentive, but in the case an outsider saw that with the bandages and scar, the period of time at night, and the many gimmicks that stand out had then transformed that smile into one of an evil demon. Every time people around him look at Usubara’s face they shook in fear and ran away, but there was no one who could immediately take notice of it now.

“Well then, Ayumi-chan, I’ll go buy us tickets so wait here a bit.”

He heard his step-mother’s innocent voice, but he decided it would be best to not look over. He thought this step-mother of his would just leave him at a loss anyway, so the more he opposed her the more the purity of the struggle would decrease. With these feelings in his heart, Usubara gazed up at the baseball stadium all lit up, but—

The next moment, *the baseball stadium vanished*.

“!?”

It was not just Usubara, but the passerby and even Yuuki at the ticket counter were wide-eyed at the sudden accident.

However, in actuality the baseball stadium did not disappear from existence.

It immediately became clear it just looked like it disappeared. The multitude of lights that illuminated the Natsugawara baseball stadium until this point turned off all at once.

### *Dai'ou TV – Game Suspension*

[This is from the broadcasting seat. Eh, currently, there is a large-scale blackout occurring inside the Natsugawara baseball stadium. This is being filmed with the emergency battery equipped in the camera, so we are broadcasting our voices via the outside broadcasting van. Well, commenter Sasabashira-san. For something like this to happen.]

[Yes, I was quite surprised. I think the night illumination has enough emergency power to at least light the hallways and audience seating.]

[It seems there has been some trouble with the stadium's electric system. When it recovers, the game will restart.....]

### *15 Minutes Later, VIP Room*

“...It'll take quite some time to come back on.”

While tapping the arm of the sofa with his fingers vice governor Hiura knitted his brows.

“Nishikino hasn't come back yet?”

Nishikino was the large bodyguard who brought Izaya back to his seat. He should have returned before the blackout, but he still has not appeared. But if they did not have the light from the secretary's smartphone they would not be able to see his face when Nishikino did come back.

“We cannot walk carelessly in this power outage, sir. The emergency lights are not even on for some reason.”

“...Even the emergency lights, huh.”

Hiura just started to feel a bit of uneasiness at the words of his bespectacled secretary, but then the electricity turned back on unexpectedly with the indoor fluorescent lights and the ground game under light equipment restored.

He wondered if the cheers emitted from the audience was from the release of their anxiety or the resuming of the game. During that moment of time there

was the announcer's official report even within the VIP room

"We apologize for the trouble. The game will restart in 5 minutes."

"Now like this Nishikino should come back.....go take a look out."

"Understood."

The secretary nodded and started walking to the outside of the door—

One moment after the door opened, there was a high-pitched scream in the VIP room.

"!"

When Hiura rushed over there, what was there was the secretary sunk down on the floor shaking, and the form of Nishikino dead, his neck broken.

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## **What Type of Person Is Izaya Orihara? (Densuke Sozoro's Case)**

What type of person is Izaya Orihara?

That is a troublesome question. Well now, he was a detective. There is someone who wants to know about Izaya-dono, you say. Well, I am not forbidden to speak.

Is it suitable if I give my opinion? Or do you need the objective view of how he carries out his role in society?

Hmm, my opinion. Then this is easy.

He is nothing more than an uncooperative, superficially dignified 5-year-old.

Furthermore, that 5-year-old may very well be the child with the worst personality you could ever imagine. Just like a child knowing he will be forgiven, he is the clever runt that craftily uses the truth.

If you were to ask me if I hate him, then naturally I should be able to say that I do.

If it were not for the contract and the debt I have towards him regarding my

family, I may have already snapped that slim neck of his.

I think I can at least be a brake for him.

As a matter of fact, his actions are inevitable.

He should be called some battle crazed demon child who is not satisfied unless he jumped in front of his enemy while also having the ability to withdraw himself in a safe place.

The problem is it is almost as if Izaya-dono himself cannot fling himself at his opponents.

I have heard the rumors from that time.

That he would jump around freely with a skill called “parkour” and mince his opponent with the free manipulation of his knife, but with the body he has right now, it is unlikely he can do those same feats.

Nevertheless, that man seems to be enjoying even these shackles.

It seems the doctors have said that if he has the will he may be able to run around again, but he does not intend to walk that path right now. He exaggerates that it is his punishment, but in his heart he may be afraid.

Returning to his old self and once again returning to his home town: Ikebukuro. I have heard that it is the town of his beginning and his ending. With degrees of circumstances. However, if I may say so, he completely reaped what he sowed. He should be grateful for the town of Ikebukuro’s benevolence just because he was not killed.

However, Izaya-dono seems to have become even more attached to “people” since that incident. Until now he seemed to prepare the large quantity of convenient “pawns” he kept a reasonable distance with, but in recent years it should be said he has come to seek for people to substitute for the “activities I cannot do” like I have.

In spite of the future of these old bones, there are certain things I have come to know consequently for living for so long.

That thing....the human Izaya Orihara’s true nature has not changed in the slightest.

It is not that I have seen that man as he was from before directly. I have not, but even so I could see the never-changing logic coursing throughout his being.

If it is a normal human being, then there are many without that logic.

I would be glad if at least that belief that dwells within him was good.

Well, there may have been a way to save him if he was completely evil.

But that is impossible.

The belief Izaya Orihara grasps is not a concept to divide into a form of good and evil.

Concerning the result, there are many concluding actions of “evil” but all are dependent on the swing of the pendulum.

No matter which direction it swings, Izaya’s actions will be “evil” to someone.

If I am capable of doing anything, I suppose I can try to suppress the amplitude of the pendulum.

However, I am poor at such work....

At least if Izaya-dono were to fall in love with one human something would change.... It is not possible. It is not possible right now.

Detective-dono, can you imagine it?

The sight of Izaya Orihara taking an interest in some pretty girl at a glance, giving himself to her even if he had to throw away everything else, so deeply in love he wants to also be completely accepted by her.

Good gracious. However, I think I would be grateful for the opposite. Think about it.

The mysterious person, who uses the art of coaxing, to truly love one person. Surely that man would then become “evil.” To only obtain that person, he would be fine with destroying the world, killing people, or making a mess of society. Furthermore, we should be grateful in fortune. For that man named Izaya Orihara, a twisted philanthropist, to love the whole human race equally.

Hmm, detective-dono.

The one who told you to ask me about Izaya Orihara is no one else than Izaya

Orihara himself is it not?

Well, it does not matter. You can tell him this as it is.

There is no need to reexamine you. There is no way for you to return to sanity. When you have finally gone mad, at least I, Densuke Sozoro, will finish you off. No, even when it is not possible for me to accomplish, that infamous man in the bartender uniform will eliminate you for certain this time. By that detestable monster who stopped being human as you call him.

However, from my perspective the one with the possibility of becoming a monster is you. Izaya-dono.

I pray to continue being human until my life has come to an end.

For Haruto-dono and miss Himari's sake as well.

And more than anything, for your own sake as well.

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### Translation Notes:

1. The name Iroha was trying to remember was likely the Niwaka Samurai. He is an urban legend in the series Hakata Tonkotsu Ramens. A legendary killer who kills other hitmen. He resides in the Hakata ward in Fukuoka City, which is on Kyushu. The dispute her adoptive father died in could possibly refer to events of the first novel, but there is no concrete evidence as of yet if her adoptive father is any character specifically in that universe.
2. The Vacant Day (空白の一日) was an actual event in late November of 1978 which involved baseball pitcher Suguru Egawa who forcibly signed with the Yomiuri Giants. A lot of the other baseball teams protested against this contract. This is because there was no reverse-contract, so they saw it as unfair. My sources were a bit limited, so I am not sure on the explicit details, but this is a really basic summary from what I understand. I don't know much about baseball, or sports in general, so I'm sorry about my limited knowledge of the subject.
3. Ice Pick Thompson is a reference to one of Narita's characters from Baccano.
4. The Spider's Thread (蜘蛛の糸) is a well-known short-story by Ryunosuke Akutagawa. Shakyamuni lowers a spider's thread into hell.

[Read more here](#) if you're curious.



# 四章



墨滿死

## Chapter 4: Two Outs, Bases Loaded

### *Ryuusei's Office*

"He did it, huh."

Ryuusei's voice was rather calm when he heard the report. However, in those eyes a flame of deep hatred was lit.

"But, how? Does this look like according to the report? In actuality it should be said it was in the hallway in front of the VIP room, not in the VIP room?"

"Didn't you not believe the meaning of the warning in the first place?"

Ryuusei covered his mouth with his right hand, and after thinking for a bit he let out a large sigh.

"The hell. Does this mean they would break their own rules they set up.....? Well, there's no way I can let them do as they please after making light of the people on stage."

"But is it really them who did it? I don't think the man in the wheelchair and that old man would be able to do anything to that bodyguard though."

"....I thought perhaps the wheelchair kid could be bluffing and actually could walk, but with that physique.....At least if he had the physique of any of our security personnel he could be adequate."

"I cannot think Izaya Orihara could kill Amagi-san, so another like a performance group slipped in. Like our third investigation division."

Tamae said and glared towards the ten others lined up in the office room. With this being an emergency situation, in the office the core staff Fudou started and a large half of the guards and third division members were assembled. And there was also Ranzou Hiura in the room as well.

"Even though my guard was killed, you're playing the investigation game rather carefree."

"Now for this, my apologies. However please do not forget that you are still a suspect. After all, there is no footage to prove your alibi."

Naturally the remote hidden cameras worked on batteries, but having it relayed, the equipment for recording was down temporarily due to the power outage. The regular wired surveillance cameras could also not record any footage during the blackout.

From the beginning that blackout itself was quite unique. Normally even in the case of lightning or an earthquake causing a power outage, the minimum system should have been maintained by the self-generating emergency power supply. But a trap was installed into the emergency power system itself.

But when exactly this was done, the technical staff found the equipment installed to cause a shortage on both electrical distribution systems – the remote controlled main power source and the emergency system – when they headed to the control room. When the repairs were finished and the power went back on was when the body of Hiura's guard was discovered. The body was currently isolated in the same underground warehouse Amagi fell in.

In any case, in front of the reality that a second murder occurred during the period of time when power outage was staged Ryuusei spoke in reconsideration as he adjusted his tie.

"We should have set up the UPS to the surveillance cameras and related equipment systems. Let's learn from this failure for the future. It'll cost a bit, but it'll be a better, perfect system."

Hiura hearing that interjected, his brows knitted.

"You got impatient, haven't you? Do you still think you can continue acting like the emperor of this stadium?"

"Yes, a formal apology for the power outage is necessary, but there is no way I would be dismissed with only this much."

"My subordinate is dead."

Ryuusei said in an aloof tone back.

"My subordinate is dead too. My dear, dear right-hand man Amagi."

In actuality Amagi was on the bottom even among Ryuusei's secretaries, but anyone who knew that did not point that out. No one felt like disagreeing with

Hiura by mentioning the truth, but more than anything everyone was afraid to incur Ryuusei's displeasure.

"It is an unfortunate result in an emergency, but shouldn't we try to do something at the fact your bodyguard also went missing?"

In other words, there was nothing more to do than to *erase* the body like with Amagi.

"Are you saying I took part in the crime?"

"You're already a suspect, are you not? You're at the point of dealing *that*. If the case goes public and *that* is discovered, I think it would be hopeless to return to the political world even if you escaped from prison, right"

"...."

Whether he got more invested in front of the silenced Hiura, Ryuusei spoke on with words filled in exalted tones.

"We are already sharing the same fate. At the same time do not forget that you are one of the suspects like I previously stated before. If there is any doubt it is endless. For example the conversation you had previously in the VIP room and everything according to the script arranged prior to would have the possibility that you were an accomplice from the beginning!"

"That would be the same for you though? Being partners with that man would bring up the possibility that you ended the life of a follower of yours in the way. So you make me an accomplice in hiding the body to shut me up."

"Of course that's how it is from your perspective. But I know I am not the culprit. And I am the human standing at the top of this *theater*. As well as being the stage director I am also the producer coloring the cast's lives. I believe I can behave as a king capable of judging people fairly at the least, and no one could give any complaints on my ruling."

Listing off extremely arrogant reasons, Ryuusei kept up with that attitude and mentioned Hiura's guard.

"It was Nishikino-san? You are a human bearing guilt over him. But now with him gone missing, no one is suspicious. In that case then if you pretend to have

extracted the data thoroughly and say ‘we ran off with secret information’ then your persuasive power would increase.”

“.....”

“Although I do feel sympathetic for you since you raised that bodyguard from the beginning. Someone who even though knew your true nature did not take any mind to it.”

Ryuusei having said that mentioned a compromised plan.

“If the process of his disappearing is a problem, wouldn’t it be fine to say he fell from the stairs? We found the bodyguard who did not return since the blackout at the bottom of the stairs. He probably was shocked by the power outage and slipped.....I think this would suffice.”

“That’d have been quite a convenient fall for having only his neck broken so neatly.”

Hiura said in dissatisfaction but no deep remorse or anger could have been felt. Ryuusei saw his attitude towards it and reached the conclusion that perhaps this male bodyguard was not that much of an important person to Hiura.

– If he was actually a secret child, that would have been an awfully interesting development though.

While thinking such imprudent thoughts in his mind, Ryuusei decided to move on to the conversation involving the current situation.

“The problem would be Izaya Orihara and the organization at his back. If he clearly picked a fight with us so far, then I have no time to choose a correspondence. Although, since Hiura-san is also a suspect, shouldn’t you take up the partnership about now?”

“But is Orihara really involved? Certainly for the circumstances he is the most suspicious, but that kid left on an agreement. He said the rest would depend on your mood. No matter what organization is backing him, where is the need to kill my guard?”

“Then it could mean he doesn’t feel like going through with a half-hearted

negotiation? Anyway what we have to do is to make sure that cheeky man calling himself an informant cannot leave this baseball stadium. Thinking of his contacts, then that old man and the kids.....we still haven't confirmed if they are friends or not, but we should ensure that woman with the laptop is for certain."

At that, Fudou who had heard the conversation between Ryuusei and Hiura spoke up fearfully.

"All together, would that mean five people? .....It will be a big job, but it won't get crazy, will it?"

"Since we can do that, we are able to pass for producers of the stage, Fudou-kun. It's alright. Believe in my theater. For times like these, we have several areas and devices not posted on the official blueprints."

"Y-yes."

Ryuusei turned his gaze from Fudou and looked at his younger sister Tamae.

"So? How are the kids?"

"They are held up in parlor sixth. I left it all to Mayuzumi-chan who came back from the VIP room before the power outage, and I left two others of the third investigation division outside the door just in case."

"Is that right. Actually while buying her was great, she still hasn't done her true job, hasn't she?"

Iroha Mayuzumi usually handled behind the scenes cleanups or selling beer as an outside job, but Ryuusei stated those were not her true jobs and continued.

"How about we have at least one person killed to threaten Izaya with. ...Well, she seemed to have been excellent in her childhood, but there's the possibility her skills have dulled. The kids will work fine as rehabilitation for her."

"Physically and mentally."

*In the Audience, the Wheelchair Space*

"Well now, the lookout is suddenly quite explicit about it, isn't it, Sozoro-san?"

Izaya, having returned to the wheelchair space, addressed Sozoro cheerfully.

Indeed, there were janitors and security staff masked they could see in the area, yet sometimes everyone would look over as though it was a normal thing to see. Mostly it was a behavior for Izaya who has continuously watched humans to an abnormal extent and for Sozoro who has tread on that path to easily tell that *they were being watched*.

“I’m sure it’s your fault. After all, you did such a terrible thing to that subordinate of Hiura-san who said he would become a mediator for me.”

“.....It could not have been helped. It was legitimate self-defense. It was nothing more than protecting ourselves from any personal threat.”

Izaya smiled at Sozoro’s declaration as he fixed his tie and shook his head.

“Self-defense, huh. You being bare-handed is similar to holding a sub-machine gun. I think you’re someone you shouldn’t cross like a boxer or a Karate practitioner.”

“More than that, do you have anything you are more curious about?”

“Nec-chan doesn’t seem to be here. Haruto-kun and Himari-chan too.”

Only the pipe chair was left; Nec and her belongings gone.

Izaya was looking around the area when his smart phone started up. It was a unique application not distributed from an official on-line software, and on the display of the application unique symbols and characters were listed.

“Huh, it’s Nec-chan.”

This was a special communication app she created as a contact communication for Candiru, and it was a product that could directly connect calls on the same equipment with Bluetooth or Wi-fi if circumstances call for it. Although since it was mostly too picky no one could use it without having the same device illegally modified.

Knowing this was a contact he knew, Izaya hit the accept button and pressed the smart phone to his ear.

“Where are you right now?”

[I saw that sister Takioka-chan coming over here on the surveillance footage, so I’m sitting in the middle of the unreserved seats to hide. When I thought it

was alright I looked back and saw you, so I contacted you as I'm hiding like this. Hee hee.]

“And? Where are the other two?”

[Huh? What's up with them?]

“.....You're surprisingly not helpful in cases like this. Although since you have those advantages and shortcomings it's a good aspect as a human being.”

Apparently ignoring Izaya ridiculing her, there was a tut and an unpleasant voice from his phone.

[Well this sucks. I thought their target was me, so I hid. I can't believe they took them.]

“And you couldn't confirm that on the surveillance cameras you hacked into?”

[That woman seemed to get strangely wary and just shut down the surveillance camera recording there. It's probably because it would have been bad if I saw the recorded footage of the moment she took the kids from elsewhere. I tried to restart it, but it's completely black.]

Izaya moved his gaze to one of the places the hidden cameras were and could see the holes in the railing coated in some kind of nail polish or lipstick.

“So it's physically closed off. It seems they are quite cautious of you. Although I thought it would have been great to at least have the moment the kids were taken.”

[Aaah, other cameras in different areas are also broken in turn. Well, thanks to that I know the general area in the stadium they were taken to.]

“It doesn't matter if we know. No matter where they were taken it's clear they're in Takioka's hands now.”

After he stated that in a carefree tone, there was a solemn voice from behind Izaya's back

“Hmm.....More importantly, I am concerned for Haruto-dono and miss Himari.”

Sozoro made a rare frown. Izaya kept his fearless smile and answered him.



“It’s alright. If they took them as a tool for the negotiation, then they won’t be reckless. If the number of bodies increase it’ll just give us a grasp on their weakness.”

“It was a mistake I accompanied you. No matter if there was the basis the kids would remain safe being here, for myself to place even a bit of faith in you was an extreme failure on my part.”

“Really now, that sure is quite a mighty failure. That’s a failure alright, Sozoro-san. For you to have seen me as a man to behave in concern for the kids in front of an exciting situation as this.”

“.....”

Sozoro’s gaze locked on Izaya. It was a glare heavy with a pressure in which that alone would make their whole body involuntarily shake if it was a normal person, but Izaya remained calm and looked back at those eyes. After a span of a few seconds in silence, Sozoro released a sigh as though giving up and after grumbling to himself he whispered, “Even if it breaks the contract, should I break his neck right here.....” And he asked his employer Izaya.

“So, what do you plan to do? Normally I think it would be to notify the police though.”

“Even if we report to the police, I don’t think they would be able to easily investigate the stadium. In the time an investigator would do a house arrest the two would disappear from the world. And besides, although I became their care taker, I would be questioned in turn since the situation involves the two of them going missing.”

“If so then how do you plan to go about it?”

“It seems they think we are the culprits that caused the incident with the body in the underground warehouse. And it appears the true culprit made some kind of threat, but I don’t know what the specifics are. From Hiura-san’s manner of speaking, it’s probably something illegal and related to huge interests.”

After thinking for a few moments, Izaya smiled and whispered in a quiet voice.

“Well, I can guess most of it, and even if I’m wrong it’ll be fine.”

Izaya then crossed his legs on the wheelchair, and he bore with the pain that ran up his spine and managed to keep his composure whilst hiding the cold sweat forming on his skin.

“If they’re going to mistake the culprit anyway, how about we have them mistake him even more so. Yeah, that’s right. Let’s let them think we have a massive corporation like Nebula or an influential mafia like the American Runarata Family backing us.”

“.....For what reason?”

“Of course it’s to save Haruto-kun and Himari-chan.”

Sozoro skillfully frowned with one brow raised.

“Really now, don’t make that face, Sozoro-san. Even I’m worried about those two, you know?”

Izaya pressed his ear against the smartphone and stated his honest feelings as though to let himself hear it as well as Nec.

“Even though these interesting humans were brought up so well, not being able to see what’s coming next....and contrarily not being able to see with these eyes of the last moment would be a very big lose for me.”

And while smiling he started to talk of the guideline of their following actions.

“And so to save those two how about we seriously put out some money and connections.”

[.....Meaning we’ll seriously make outside commissions too? And why would that be? Hee hee.]

Aside from long human acquaintances with Izaya, the moment she heard it she phrased it similarly to mean ‘are you alright in the head?’

“What, it’s really simple. *Let’s become the real culprit.*”

“And we’ll give a modest standing ovation. ...To say to the *former* true culprit ‘thank you for your hard work.’”

*The Sixth Parlor Room*

In the Summer Tile Stadium there were hidden parlor rooms. There were five parlor rooms written on the official blue prints submitted to the fire stations. However, underground there were plenty of hallways that should not exist formerly, and one of the rooms established there was the sixth parlor room.

It was a room to hold meetings with *guests* who should not be in the stadium or to keep troublesome people in confinement temporarily – Currently it was being used as the latter.

“Hey, where’s Izaya-san? Is he still talking to the big guy?”

“I suppose, I think he’ll come by soon.”

Iroha answered with just the form of a smile. And then seeing the boy completely deceived by her fake smile and withdrawing with a single ‘alright,’ her heart throbbed slightly.

And if there was more to mention, in contrast to the boy the girl’s gaze, which showed an open hostility towards her since the beginning, continued to gouge out at Iroha’s heart.

“....”

“Want something to drink?”

She asked the girl make a hard expression at her, but she shook her head.

“You may put poison in it, so no.”

“I wouldn’t put poison in it.”

“The only person who would honestly say to the other ‘I’ll put in poison’ is just about Izaya Orihara.”

“I-I see. This Izaya-san is quite impressive.”

Having sensed that this Izaya was completely hated on by her, she was convinced that these two may have been mistaken for being connected to him. And as though he had heard the contents of their conversation, the boy named Haruto nodded his head deeply.

“That’s right! Izaya-san is amazing!”

Haruto explained to Iroha of how great Izaya Orihara was even though she

was not listening.

At first it was nothing more than the child perspective of ‘He has a lot of computers!’ or ‘He treats us out for sukiyaki often!’, but at last an interesting topic reached Iroha’s ears.

“Ummm, also, he’s friends with some great police guy!”

“.....Police?”

“Yeah! He said he may become a boss character in the police someday! That’s right, isn’t it! Himari-chan!”

“A boss character...”

*Does that mean the police chief?*

Thinking there was no way he would know someone like that, she glanced over towards the girl. The girl, Himari, gave her a hostile glare, but with the same expression she provided her an answer albeit annoyed.

“What Haruto says is true. He’s an elite in the career bureau, and they said he’s now a police chief. I don’t know his name though.”

“.....”

In contrast to Haruto who was younger than his outward appearance, Himari had the attitude of a grown-up. There was enough persuasion in the girl’s words for it to mean ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ so just to affirm it Iroha decided to inform that to the manager of the Third Investigation Division, Tamae Takioka.

While in many ways holding a much too naive expectation as someone raised as a killer that no harm would come to the kids if they know Izaya Orihara was connected with the police.

*Ryuusei’s Office*

“A subordinate of the police....?”

Hearing Tamae’s report, Ryuusei frowned expectantly. Hiura was also making a hard expression.

“Well, since it’s only what Mayuzumi-chan heard from the kids, we don’t know if it’s true or not.”

“It’s easy to dismiss nonsense of children, but.....His composure is thanks to that? I don’t think the police itself would be Izaya Orihara’s *client* though.....”

Ryuusei strongly shook his head towards the slightly daunted looking Hiura.

“If the police have a grasp on the information of *that*, then we can’t use any of these roundabout methods. This stadium would suddenly become the target of enforced investigation, and if they plan to use it without destroying it then it would be faster to directly pressure me or you.”

“If that’s the case, that means the organization behind this guy currently is irrelevant. But if we carelessly kill him there is the chance our information would leak to the police bureaucracy.....Really, killing him would be the opposite of what we want.”

“It would especially be problematic for you, right, Hiura-san. The record of your tax evasion in 1996 would be let out after all.”

“Even so, I think I’m better off than you who is involved with the *lighting* and *extras*.”

“I won’t leave any evidence. No matter who tells the police. I have had all the evidence underneath the stadium cleaned up, so given time it won’t be an issue.”

“Anyway, we should call Izaya Orihara in here. Threaten him or negotiate with him; we cannot start without the person himself present.”

“.....”

Hiura seemed to want Izaya Orihara to stand in this place, but Ryuusei could not approve that easily. Ryuusei considered negotiating to mean for the other to stand at the same height as him.

He was a man who would declare mere one sided threats between negotiations of countries with different national power, and he believed that naturally his *country* the Summer Tile Stadium as the same as that. There was no way the likes of an ordinary informant should be able to stand along side him as king governing this ‘theater.’

Ryuusei thought that quietly to himself. He steadied his breath and started to

ponder on *how far he would go*.

- Let's assume the one backing him is the Awakusu group.
- If they are, then they have already killed two of our own.
- Then if we had to make revenge we would be made light of by the Awakusu group.
- For them continuing murder in the middle of negotiations would be for us to notice their threat.....
- Then could threatening me who is connected to the Asuki group be to own the power only a superior above me would have? Or have they stepped forward in eagerness to establish superiority with the interests of *that*.....?
- Either way, we kill Izaya Orihara and we will have to take the price.
- Or we threaten Izaya Orihara and make him a pawn....?

Bewildered by the opposing organization's intentions, Ryuusei kept his emotions at bay so that impatience of 'the executive does not get confused' was shown on the outside.

Hiura also put up a poker face the same way to avoid suspicion of his own bewilderment.

However, the one who was most bewildered in this baseball stadium was not them. In the massive *theater*, Summer Tile Stadium, the one who was most confused was not Ryuusei or Hiura-

- Why.
- Why is Izaya Orihara acting like this?

It was the one who could not read the mysterious man Izaya's intentions; the true culprit of the murder case themselves.

And it would become even more digressed, but—

Currently the next thing the true culprit was confused by were the security guards unaware of the hidden information, who monitored the regular surveillance cameras.

"Hey....."

The security guards watching the monitor frowned at what they saw.

“Isn’t that guest.....kinda big?”

If it was just that it would be left with ‘he’s just tall, maybe he’s a basketball or volleyball player?’ But that man had dyed blue hair and an abnormal appearance with half of his face wrapped hidden in bandages. What was even more strange of that man squirming in the high resolution of the wired camera was that of the continuous turning of his head as though searching for something, but without even turning an eye towards the baseball game nearing its end.

### *Inside the Stadium On the Side of the Entrance Gate*

That giant – Ayumi Usubara – finally found something relating to his goal after looking around for a few moments. It was the pamphlet for the seating guide left on the baseball stadium shop. Since he completely forgot to receive one at the ticket counter he thought there would be the same ones in the baseball stadium and walked around searching for it.

“.....”

“Welco-.....!?”

A sudden aggressive looking giant appeared in front of them, and the staff member at the hotdog stand shook in shock. The man apologized with one hand in the shape of cutting the air lightly and picked up only one pamphlet. His massive hands skillfully open up the pamphlet, and he started to look for the characters on the seating position drawing ‘wheelchair space.’

“How is it? Ayumi-chan. Did you find that Orihara-kun kid?”

“.....”

Hi step-mother poked her head out from the side of the pamphlet, but he shook his head as his eyes passed over the front seats and confirmed he was currently standing on the opposite side behind the unreserved seats.

“Even so thanks to the blackout the admission restriction was surprising! I wonder if lightning came down. Even though it’s such good weather.”

Usubara moved his focus towards the night equipment briefly, while his step-

mother made optimistic comments. Usubara also thought the power outage was strange, and the thought that perhaps it had something to do with Izaya Orihara was stuck in the corner of his mind.

While keeping that in mind, he slowly moved his gaze towards the other side of the stand. It seemed Usubara's eyesight was pretty good as he caught the sight of one person in a wheelchair lined up along one section.

The next moment—

He found the man clad in black clothes and the old man with white hair standing beside him. At the same time, he pasted a villainous smile on his face. A smile as though one found a sunken ship after long years of searching or clad with tremendous killing intent when faced with revenge for one's parents.

The audience around them looked over towards him noticing that 'there seems to be a really tall person here,' and then the hairs on their body stood up. Just like the customers at the ramen shop or the taxi driver, they felt their lives were in danger. The next moment, they felt they would be killed by this terrifying man.

However within the area only the step-mother Yuuki stood with a calm expression. Seeing the audience around them terrified by Usubara she gave a warning to her son.

"Ayumi-chan, I said this before but you can't go on a rampage here, alright?"

### *In the Audience*

The game was about to enter its eighth inning. The audience was consumed in an unusual craze. It was Kanshirou Munakata's record that was stopped at his three turns at the bat continuing from the previous game, but on his third turn to bat for this game he hit a home run followed by another home run on his fourth turn at the bat.

With this today's score was three home runs with three strikes in one inning. If after this he managed another turn at bat he would be lined up with a major record comparable to the king players as four consecutive home runs in a game.

"Well this sucks, the game is also getting so interesting."



In front of the craze of the spectators the stadium was wrapped up in Izaya was captured with the desire to observe the fate of the enthusiasm until its very end.

“I consider it is a bad hobby of yours, but if you are really interested you can ask miss Nec to save the recording of the audience and enjoy it later.”

“My, for you to make such a proposal without thinking of the civilians’ privacy. I’m stunned.”

“While I am reluctant on the matter, right now it is more concerning for us to prioritize the safety of the children.”

Receiving a glance from Sozoro, Izaya continued to type on his smart phone as he shrugged his shoulders back.

“Whoa, this isn’t good either....Tsukumoya who I asked a favor on won’t do it.”

While giving a bitter smile he looked over the reply from the hacker-like man named Tsukumoya.

“Hmmmm. ‘I don’t feel like participating in that sort of crime. You can have Sozoro-san go in on the executive, beat him up, and make him a hostage.’ He says. ....That’s odd. I haven’t thoroughly explained all the details here.....”

Izaya while thinking of the hacker called number one even in the Kanto region searched for other options. *‘As always he’s an unsettling guy.’* And then Sozoro behind him lightly tightened his fists and said.

“I do not mind doing that. Actually, I am wishing for that if it means we can save them expeditiously.”

“Now don’t say that. If you’re just going to go on a rampage, shouldn’t you do it with more style? Besides, it’s not like I’m just standing by idle either.”

As he said this, Izaya made a call with Nec who was continuing work sitted a little ways off in the center of the unreserved seats.

“Hey, Nec-chan. Tsukumoya won’t do, so I’ll ask the Hakata guy, Blackleg Nameko-kun. Sorry but could you contact them?”

[J-jersey 24-kun? You mean to owe that fungus type guy? Eeeh? I’m definitely

going to say some things later, you know? Who knows if you'll get yourself a bounty?]

“We’re a bit restricted on people who could accomplish the task in a short time besides Tsukumoya. That kind of work is a field you’re not good in, right? He has a debt towards me for a reasonable job I took a few years back, so I just decided to have the favor returned.”

[Hee hee! That’s quite a high interest that came in.]

Nec started to make contact with the hacker by the name blackleg\_nameko.

On Izaya’s side he began to make a call to another person.

“Yes, it’s me, but is it alright to start as soon as the preparations are completed? After that I’ll manage to match the timing. Tell Fujiura-san that too, so, I’ll leave you to it.”

“ .... ”

Not grasping what Izaya was doing, Sozoro continued to pray for Haruto and Himari’s safety in his heart. Just that one wish. While also holding onto the conviction that for all involved it will end badly either way.

As he was continuing to be bewildered at Izaya’s and Nec’s work there was an impressive cheer from around them. When they looked at the diamond vision screen it seemed that Kanshirou Munakata’s turn at the bat has come around. The game had turned into a batting battle and at this rate since there was the chance for his turn to come around again one last time. And the dream of him accomplishing a feat could become a big record lasting in baseball history.

“Well, it seems to become really incredible.”

As Izaya smiled he looked towards Sozoro standing beside him.

“Now that’s it’s gotten this wild, is your intuition becoming dull? At this rate you probably can’t tell the difference between Takioka’s or Hiura’s subordinates, right?”

“Hmph.....However, if there is someone with any apparent killing intent, I can differentiate them by just their bearing. It is not a matter of looking at someone one by one but by chasing sensations for an out-of-place feeling while looking

at the whole crowd.....”

Sozoro cut off for a moment. One eye opened real wide and after several seconds in silence he spoke while stroking his beard as though in admiration.

“Well.....now look at this.”

“? What’s wrong? Sozoro-san?”

“Hmmm, unexpected meetings are quite terrifying. I cannot believe to see a person we know at a place like this. Haha, I noticed right away from the tremendous killing intent.”

“Killing intent.....You don’t mean you can see something like an aura like you’re someone from some fighting manga right?”

After questioning him Izaya took out opera-glasses from his bag and moved over in the direction Sozoro was looking at.

“It is in front of the hotdog stand.”

“Sozoro-san, are you farsighted? Even though you have glasses you can see that place well, huh. Where is it...”

And then seeing the giant silhouette appearing in the lens Izaya unconsciously raised his voice.

“.....Whoaa. No way.”

His smile did not fall from his face, but his eyes were not smiling.

“I give up. Regardless if my coming to this baseball stadium today is really a coincidence or not, didn’t this just get odd?”

“Let me see. Between myself and you, which one of us does he resent?”

“I think it’s both? Seriously, I like humans, but I prefer to observe those types of people from far away.....Being chased by that kind of guy makes me remember an unpleasant monster...”

Izaya told Sozoro while receiving a flashback of memories when he was in Ikebukuro.

“This is difficult. Even though we just finished preparations. All that’s left is to leave it to Nec.....Well then, let’s run away, Sozoro-san.”

“? Run away.....Where would that be? While I hold that back, you will be defenseless .....You do not mean to leave the stadium?”

“No, there’s a more safe place, right? A place that suspicious outsider can’t get into.”

Izaya pressed the self-propulsion switch for the wheelchair and began to move towards the stand. And then approaching the security staff nearby – a man he recalled as Takioka’s subordinate that was watching him – he addressed him with a triumphant smile.

“Now then, I want to hear Takioka-san’s answer soon.....could you guide me to the executive’s room?”

*A few minutes later*

“What’s this? They’re gone?”

Having arrived to the wheelchair space and tilting her head in confusion, Yuuki looked around aimlessly.

She told Usubara, ‘if you suddenly meet Izaya-kun you’ll get into a fight, right? I’ll ask him to come to the outside of the stadium first, so until then wait here.’ And after telling Usubara who seemed like he wanted to say something, ‘It’s alright! I don’t think he can do anything in front of these people,’ she walked all the way over here. But the crucial figures of Izaya Orihara and the old man had vanished completely.

*Did they go to the restrooms or something?*

She considered this, but then thinking perhaps he noticed her son and ran away she decided to ask the people around her. The children in wheelchairs watching the game next to the young man like Izaya Orihara provided a, “he just left somewhere.” The woman accompanying them gave her eye-witness information with, “Yes, the person with the cool elderly man, right! If it’s that person you’re asking for he just talked with that guard over there.....and then someone came to greet them and then left with the elderly man somewhere.”

Yuuki then approached the guard steadily without a second thought on the matter. Even if she drew back on her optimistic personality it would be a difficult order to tell the baseball stadium staff to be cautious of her. After all,

the regular audience including Yuuki did not realize the ruined atmosphere surrounding this stand.

“Ummm, I’m sorry. I’m looking for this kid, but have you seen him? He’s a friend of my son.”

The guard looked at the picture the pretty woman had and for a moment his eyes widened. He then recovered his poker face and began to make a wireless call somewhere.

### *Ryuusei’s Office*

“What is it? Izaya has already been picked up by Fudou-kun, right? .....Eh?”

Hearing the message from the underling of the third investigation division, Tamae frowned.

“Nii-san, it seems a woman came looking for Izaya in the wheelchair space.....”

”.....Someone he’s connected with?”

“Apparently she said he’s a friend of her son. But she still looks young.”

“I see, so words to trick us. A friend of her son.....I see, her son being the boy in the sixth parlor room right now then?”

Izaya was being led by Fudou and would be arriving soon .

*For a contact to appear with this timing then is there some sort of mistake?*

After thinking for a little bit, but wanting another card to threaten Izaya Orihara with he gave the order with a plain expression.

“Bring her to the sixth parlor room. After that.....tell them to be politely hospitable towards her. With the kids too.”

“I got it. Should I bring out tea?”

Ryuusei said sarcastically at his sister’s question, partially mixed with a joke, with the corners of his mouth raised into a smile.

“It may be their last dinner. If they have hope, let them eat whatever they like.”

Without realizing what kind of disaster he called for on that judgement he just gave.

### *In the Audience*

After his step-mother talked to the stadium's staff she disappeared. From far away he saw it. There was one person from the other side of the stadium that witnessed it. It was Usubara who was told by his step-mother to 'wait here.'

However, it was not in front of the hot dog stand where she said those words. But since Izaya Orihara and Sozoro started to move and vanished when he was watching the scene he tried to go to the same side of the unreserved seats to stop his step-mother. But in the midst of that, in the gap of a few seconds he looked away his step-mother disappeared.

### *Perhaps she went to the restroom or something?*

He unconsciously thought that in his mind. Or perhaps he wished for that. However his animal-like intuition was making his whole body apprehensive as though sensing something is wrong.

Usubara made it all the way to the wheelchair space you whipped his head around the area. And he found a familiar face there. They only interacted for barely a few days, but it was the woman who worked on the same team as him.

Usubara moved with quick feet to the unreserved seats, brushing aside the crowd using half of his strength and reached out to *her* shoulder.

After she hushed a small an "oh shi-" and tried to slip into a gap in the crowd. But Usubara's hand, which was one instant faster, succeeded in grasping the nape of her neck. Usubara then picked her up with one hand.

When they made eye contact-although he was completely unaware of his own actions, he did confirm that the gothic woman was definitely someone he knew.

The other party was the woman being held roughly like a cat, Nec. After averting her gaze disgustingly, she raised a hand to the giant with a troublesome smile.

"Yahho~, it's been awhile. Usubara-cchi."

“Ummmm.....You, were from that Adamura-san’s place, right? Hee hee.”

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## What Type of Person Is Izaya Orihara? (Nec’s Case)

Huh? What do I think of Izaya? He’s the president, right? An unsettling guy right? Is there anything else?

Have I ever seen him as someone of the opposite sex? Hee hee. You ask quite the stupid question. If there was a woman who fell for that guy, wouldn’t she be quite the suitable advocate?

I heard the one person the president trusted the most was some pharmacist lady who worked as his secretary...but it seems she’s in America now and more than that I heard she has a huge brother complex, so she doesn’t even have one millimeter of interest in him.

Well anyway, he and I are not like that. It’s a complete mutual interest...or rather I should say we have a business partner relationship.

If it wasn’t for that, who knows how many times I would have killed him. Hee hee. What did he do? Nah, it’s just he gave my real na-...

Yeah, sorry. It’s nothing. Just forget it, forget it. If you don’t forget it, you’ll die. I’m serious. Hee hee.

Well, I am grateful to him though. He gave me, an incompatible person in society, a job and a place to belong to. Besides, say this or that, but I’m also just one variety of a sickness.

The troubles he brings sucks, but it can be relatively fun. He’s okay with bothering people around him. He’s never had such brakes, but...it’s best to say he is a bad example to learn from. He does much more excessive things than I, so when I see other people’s behavior conversely it calms me down with a feeling of changing my own behavior.

Yeah. I’m grateful to him. It’s really true.

Sometimes I think “it’d be great if he’d die,” but that’s better than Sozoro-san or Himari-chan constantly thinking “just die” towards him. Well, I guess you could say either way the two of them are more like the people with common

sense. Hee hee.

Well, no. Any person would say that about him. I think of him as just a computer bug. He doesn't self-multiply, but he's the type of bug you cannot completely eliminate. And what's more annoying is that he knows he is a bug.

You should be careful too.

That bug cannot multiply by itself. However, he specializes in breaking the normal parts and making other bugs.

But it might be too late. For you to want to know him in full detail, you may already be a bug. Though I have always been a computer virus from the beginning rather than a bug. Hee hee hee....Well, I'm a virus behaving like a bug, so I don't have much meaning in existing.

I said this a while ago, but since Izaya gives someone like me meaning, I'm grateful. If he ever tries to give me boring stuff, I totally plan on biting the hand that fed me!

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### **Translation Notes:**

1. The Runarata Family is a reference to Narita's other series Baccano.
2. Jersey 24 is referring to Enokida from Hakata Tonkotsu Ramens. In the Durarara!! x Hakata Tonkotsu Ramens crossover, Enokida tasks Izaya with a personal job for him. That crossover novel takes place during the 4th volume of Durarara. This is likely when the 'favor he has to return to him' Izaya was referring to.

Illustration provided by Soutenkyuu on Tumblr.



# 五章

## 試合放棄



## Chapter 5: Game Abandonment

The standing ovation given by the spectators was shaking the whole stadium. It was probably because Kanshirou Munakata had hit a third consecutive home run for the second time today.

However the result itself meant nothing to Izaya Orihara. The target of his interests was the movement of the human heart brought out from that result. In other words *kandou*, which controlled the body.

Consequently, imagining the emotions of each person echoing in the stadium from the immense standing ovation, Izaya decided to reflect upon the happiness thoroughly. Just like the loneliness of smelling nothing but the splendorous meal placed in front of someone, presently for Izaya just by thinking of the people's joy or the lament of the pitcher he could truly feel alive.

"You're making quite a delightful face, Izaya Orihara-kun."

There was a voice with various emotions feigned in an astounding amount of calm addressing Izaya, who had been immersed in conceited joy. While taking in the heat within that complex tone, Izaya had a gentle smile on his face and moved his wheelchair to the direction of the voice.

"Of course, it's because I have been able to meet with you. President of the baseball stadium Ryuusei Takioka."

"That's the most important. Call me executive."

It was Izaya in the center of the room, but the situation was anything but good. If one could thought it over normally, it would be a good impression to say it was the worst situation.

The office serving as both a unique reception room and a meeting room was actually about thirty meters wide, but with this many people spread out throughout the room the space felt a bit confined.

There was Izaya Orihara sitting in the wheelchair in the center. And Sozoro standing beside him. In front of the office desk opposing them stood Ryuusei Takioka and Tamae Takioka next to him. A little off to the side Hiura sat on the

sofa and a secretary with a blue tinged face was positioned behind him. And then there were several subordinates Fudou started with who knew *Ryuusei's true face*.

And finally there was each person of the third investigation division facing towards Izaya vigilantly. With the situation having more than twenty people crowded in there, all with weapons on them, left an impression that a one sided slaughter could begin at any point.

In the midst of such a overwhelming difference in position, Ryuusei gave Izaya a composed smile. He was looking down on him, but with a sharp gaze holding no precaution the *king* of this stadium spoke.

“How dare you. Though I do admire you for being able to boldly show your face in front of me.”

“Would you have liked me to cower in fear within the shadows?”

“It doesn't matter if I would have liked that or not, that would be natural.”

Takioka declared with no intent for negotiating, glaring him down from above.

“For stepping into the ‘theater’ I built, I'll have you play a suitable role. Your role will be nothing more than *chinpira* A who has ended up miserably begging for his life for getting too cocky.”

“There are a lot of types of producers who take the perspective of actor, you know?”

“Unfortunately, I'm not that type. I think the producer is the god of the stage and the stage director the king. A malevolent god a tyrant. It's fine for people to just be manipulated puppets. You all should just offer your respects to the stadium that is this ‘theater’ of mine and continue to bear fear in your hearts.”

Perhaps he got more invested in this conversation, but Ryuusei spoke in a manner leaning more towards theatrical expressions as always. Each person in the area thought to themselves it was tedious and tried to brush it off. However.

Izaya Orihara began to throw back words to his statement head on.

“This place is your theater? That can't be it, right? I think the real owner is the

head of the Natsugawara group Byakuyamaru Natsugawara-san. The one who makes the final decisions for what will perform in that theater. If you are not the puppet gauging the sponsor's feelings then who can prove that?"

"The substantial ruler is different from the outward king. The Natsugawara group is after all just money hungry. I completed this 'theater' the Summer Tile Stadium with just my power alone! If there is any weakness to it then it is only that it has the name Natsugawara Baseball Stadium. But eventually that too is a plan for change when I seize control of the Natsugawara group."

Takioka readily expressed his rebellion against the parent corporation, the Natsugawara group. But his rampage did not stop there.

"I have the duty to make this stadium a more perfect 'theater.' You could say I was born to do this. That's right. This stadium will surpass the boundaries of the theater in the end, and as one country, no, it'll be as one completed world itself! I can do that!"

Takioka shouted, his voice ringing like an actor of an opera.

Hiura averted his gaze, thinking, 'I'll pretend I didn't hear that just now.' And Tamae had her usual, never-changing smile, but her eyes remained quiet. The guards also did not show any expression on their faces, and one of the people like Fudou was frightened and had a look as though he wanted to say 'yeah, if that declaration is leaked outside what do we plan on doing?' However since the wild idea became a motive power to rise up in the Natsugawara group it was not easy to revoke that. They could not.

In the midst of everyone thinking that, there was the sound of applause within the office. The sound of a slow yet strong applause.

"Excellent."

The one who gave the applause was no one else but Izaya Orihara. While remaining seated in the wheelchair, he gazed at Takioka with sharp eyes and continued to give an applause of praise.

"That is truly a magnificent dream. Indeed, for such great exploits would not have been accomplished without your level of competence. No, even if they had the competence, it is also necessary to have the power to fulfill it. In truth,

you opened a vent in the Natsugawara group you direct and gained this stadium and the Serpents! The completed ‘theater’ you direct makes one universe. You had that possibility to do that.”

Izaya praised him, raising the status of ‘the world’ to ‘universe’ nonchalantly, but Takioka frowned at the last words.

“.....I *had* the possibility. Why did I hear the past tense form?”

“Well, it is. The present you does not have the path leading to the creation of heaven and earth as an option.”

When Izaya made the mention of creation, Fudou and the ones around them had the thought ‘Huh? Another one with a cork screw in their head increased?’ However since Ryuusei looked over to him with glaring eyes of interest in the conversation there was not alternative to interrupt Izaya.

Without reading the atmosphere around him, Izaya continued talking in a manner for Ryuusei to swallow.

“You have a ‘theater’ close to perfection. And you have the talent suited as a stage director and producer for that theater. You also have the courage to fight against the world.....Just with that it would not be a disappointment. Just one thing. Well, if I could thin it down more then it’s because of two components you lack that will cause the curtains to come down in the middle of your scenario.”

“What are you saying that I lack?”

He at first planned to hear out the man’s show of courage since he was backed into a corner, but Ryuusei immediately got concerned in what Izaya said was ‘something he lacked’ and got caught in his opponent’s pace.

Now with pure interest, he demanded an answer from Izaya. The answer provided to Ryuusei’s question was enough to jolt his heart.

“It’s capable people. The cast and staff.”

“.....What?”

Ryuusei frowned, but Izaya ignored him and looked around in full circle while remaining seat in his wheelchair.

“You didn’t gather the appropriate actors that would make your stage successful. And it is difficult to say your staff is doing a perfect job either. Even though your directions are perfect, the people around you don’t believe in your words. With this the stage isn’t complete.”

As though it was enough to make one think he prepared a script from the start, theatrical phrases spilled out from Izaya’s mouth at length. Sozoro had listened beside him and thought, ‘he’s really a man born with a big mouth.’ But he remained silent and watched the course of events as the mere attendant pushing his wheelchair.

“Your dreams, ambitions, no, not even your realistic plans; no one in this room believes in them. Including your sister Tamae.”

“...What are you saying? That’s ridiculous.”

Immediately having to reject his words, Tamae oped her mouth to laugh as though scoffing. Izaya gave a single glance towards her and stated mockingly.

“You’re quite flustered, Tamae-san. Having one eyebrow slightly raised is a sign for lying, you know?”

“Wha-.....”

“I know those kinds of things. Even this is part of being an informant after all. I have to be able to tell if someone is lying or not for business.”

After remaining quiet for a while, Ryuusei asked in response to Izaya with a calm and self-possessed expression.

“Izaya Orihara. Are you able to show such composure because you have the belief you won’t be killed? You think we would consider the organization at your back and refrain ourselves?”

“No way. You are the type of person to actively kill and show your position to your opponent right? Then could it be a consideration for Hiura-san if you do not kill me right away ?”

“.....”

Hiura glared at Izaya.

“Hey, even if I wasn’t involved, if you die.....would that data on the 1996 case

be leaked?”

“I wonder about that. I think it would depend on the decision of the person taking care of that.”

“You bastard...”

“Well, I thought I would suggest the same proposal to Takioka-san, but for your case he has the ability to dispose of all the evidence before the police or the media gets a hand on it.”

Takioka answered with a snort.

“The theater is made for that purpose after all.”

Takioka moved around the inside of his office desk and asked Izaya.

“Izaya Orihara, we have something called honor here. At the very least, how about we go through with the negotiations if you hand over the perpetrator.”

“A perpetrator, you say. For which case? There are too many I know of that happened in this stadium. Generally speaking who are the victims?”

“Naturally, it’s the murder cases. My subordinate Amagi and vice governor’s bodyguard Nishi.....ummm.”

“It’s Nishikino.”

Hiura added plainly at Takioka’s hesitance.

“Right, the perpetrator who killed Nishikino. It hasn’t even been an hour since Nishikino was killed. I think he’s still around the baseball stadium, but.....if he is a killer you guys hired would that be a major loss, so how about presenting him to us?”

“Haha, so it’s come to this.”

Naturally Izaya did not know the culprit. Moreover it was a first for him to hear two people died. Nishikino was likely the man who showed them out from Hiura’s VIP room.

“With my jurisdiction alone, I cannot. Do you mind if I make a call?”

“Yeah, but we’ll listen in on all of it. You’ll make the call here.”

“Alright, I do not mind.”

Izaya took out the cell phone and made a call with Nec’s app. In an instant, Tamae’s expression clouded over slightly. She probably planned to verify the other party with some method if it was a regular phone line. But with an independent app she could not immediately solve it.

Nec picked up, and Izaya started to speak to her while enjoying Tamae’s mortified expression.

“Hey, it’s me. Did that Usubara guy head over there?”

[Yeah, it was bad he found me. Also, I um, I honestly said I think you went in one of the stadium’s offices somewhere. Sorry? And he just went into the backyard just a moment ago. The security personnel who were trying to stop him in a panic were dragged through the door, but I think it’ll be bad when he hears your location from them.]

Nec’s voice could not be heard to those in the area. Using that to his advantage, Izaya continued speaking as though he was talking with *his employer*.

“Actually, with the case of Amagi-san and Nishikino-san getting killed we’ll need something to strike a deal. Is Usubara someone who wouldn’t be a problem to dispose of?”

[.....Kee hee hee. Is that it? Amagi-san and Nishikino-san. Ok, Ok. So, who’ll do it?]

“Aah, of course Takioka-san or Tamae-san. It seems they will not be convinced if Hiura-san and the baseball managers are killed. Could I have permission from above?”

[In short, all people involved then. Kee hee hee. Right, how should we harass them?]

“Anyway if the decision is made, you can contact me through text. I’ll leave the negotiations to the higher ups. See you.”

[Ok, ok. Alright then, I’ll go do some grave robbing. Kee hee hee.]

At the same time he cut the call, Takioka broadly grinned.



“Usubara.....That’s the name of our perpetrator?”

“He’s a fairly strong person. If you wanted his person right away I would help give guidance, but sincerely watch out for resistance from him.”

“Sorry, but we have the preparations done for that already.”

After Takioka said that he opened the drawer of the desk and took out a certain object. Hidden under the bottom draw was a handgun equipped with a silencer.

“My, you have quite the dangerous thing there.”

“It’s because there are guys like you. It’s necessary to have equipment to protect myself. Of course just about everyone around us has one.”

And then once again he made a wide smile and with that villainous grin stated.

“You said earlier that I lacked people. But how about you? If it is you, would you be able to perform perfectly by my intentions?”

“If you’re asking which I am then I am the type working behind the scenes.”

“That isn’t a role; that’s a problem of resolve. I would like to test to see if you and I could be business partners.”

And then Ryuusei slowly walked forward and placed the handgun in front of Izaya. The guards and the third investigation team members reached for their pockets in hast, but Ryuusei looked down at Izaya sitting in the wheelchair with an inhumane smile.

“This is the first script I’ll bestow onto you as the director.”

Then pointing with his chin to Sozoro standing only a few steps away ordered him.

“You’ll shoot that old man who has pushed your wheelchair. By your hand.”

*The Sixth Parlor Room*

“Huh? Where’s Izaya Orihara-kun? It can’t be you, could it?”

The place Yuuki Usubara was taken to was an underground parlor room. When Yuuki looked around the area, there were two children and a young

woman wearing a bartender uniform. The man who guided her already left the room, and at that moment she sensed the sound of the door locking.

However, more than worrying about that right away, one of the children – the boy – called out to her.

“Eh? Onee-chan, do you know Izaya-san?”

“Ahh, seriously. To call me onee-chan, you’re good at flattery.”

In actuality she was in her twenties with a child-like face so it should be a normal occurrence for her, but perhaps because of her self-awareness as a widow and Ayumi’s step-mother she was under the impression that she was a great mother. After she patted the boy’s head, the woman wearing a bartender uniform moved towards them.

“Hey, ummm.....What type of connection do you have with Izaya Orihara?”

“Eh? Yeah, right. Izaya Orihara-kun, you see, is a friend of my son!”

“Your son’s...?”

Iroha Mayuzumi was confused. If she had a son, no matter how old she was her son would have to be around five years old.

*So what does it mean he is a friend of Izaya’s?*

“Ummmm.....How long ago were you an acquaintance of Izaya-san?”

“I’m going to meet him for the first time today! At first I thought I would give him a complaint, but I’m looking forward to see what kind of kid he is when I meet him!”

The woman had suitable, sparkles in her eyes on that child-like face. Iroha remained unsure how to correspond to her. The message talked about a contact of Izaya’s, but she did not seem like that at all.

“Umm, so what about you then?”

“Ah, yes. I’m Iroha Mayuzumi.”

In the midst of her confusion, Iroha thoughtlessly gave her name.

“Iroha-chan! That’s such a cute name! I’m Yuuki Usubara, nice to meet you!”

That was just chance. A slightly trivial moment for the one woman to decide on ‘changing jobs.’

– Ah, I see.

– I really got soft (got dull).

– A killer wouldn’t easily give their real name.

– Huh? Well, this one of mine is from a purchased registry so would it be fine?

– Besides I didn’t have a name the last time I killed someone.

– .....

– It doesn’t matter. It’s troublesome.

– When today’s job ends, I suppose I could run away to some other area somewhere and become a worker for a coffee shop or something.

When she was absentmindedly considering those thoughts, the woman who asked for her name continued conversing with her with an innocent smile.

“That’s right! I wonder what type of job you have. Hmmm, wait, wait, I’m going to guess! Since you’re wearing a bartender uniform, a bartender – would be too simple wouldn’t it?”

Watching the girl circle around her to study her, Haruto joined in. ‘What is it? A guessing game? That sounds fun!’

The pretty girl and elementary school boy circled around her, and in front of the peculiar situation with the two staring at her intently, Iroha stopped comprehending exactly what was going on.

“Hmmm, perhaps, a body guard?”

“!?”

“How you walk is the exact same as how some of the people working in the Adamura household did, and since you don’t seem to be part of the Yakuza, maybe something more along the lines of that?”

Immediately following what Yuuki suggested, Haruto made a guess.

“Well, umm, I think she’s a killer!”

“!?”

“Yeah, I debated that possibility too! Then let’s take this chance and say she’s a spy! A spy – isn’t that pretty cool, a spy! Okay, what else? What’s the right answer?”

To the inquisitive Yuuki and Haruto with eyes sparkling with interest, Iroha mislead them with an extremely confused look and a forced smile.

“Ahaha, there is no way I am any of those, right? ...If I was an assassin or a spy, wouldn’t I be scary?”

Haruto readily replied to Iroha.

“Eh? Why?”

“What do you mean why...Me a professional killer? If I was I could kill you, you know?”

“It’s okay! There are good hit men! Izaya-san’s friends have a lot of them!”

He spoke something so obscenely dangerous with a smile that matched his naive words.

“Besides, onee-chan gave me some ice cream! Even if you killed a lot of people, I bet you’re a nice person!”

With more to add Yuuki commented as though in agreement with him.

“That’s right, no matter how many people the lead actor of a historical play has cut down, he’s a good person.”

Shivers ran down Iroha’s back in shock.

*Does that mean Izaya Orihara’s connections are all like that?*

Outwardly and inwardly no matter which perspective of society she took, it was apparent this was not normal. However, on the other hand, she strangely felt relieved. Even though it was an abnormal situation, to be trusted by the children immediately upon meeting them made her feel uplifted.

– A good person, huh.

– This sucks.

– Even though I just decided today will be my last at this.

Experiencing deep emotions, Iroha plainly thought with a smile.

– At this rate, my last job will become *difficult to kill*.

– Aaah, it's good the order to kill the kids hasn't come.

But in the end if the order was given she would follow through with her job. Though she called the children and Yuuki abnormal, perhaps her unwavering decision on the matter was due to her upbringing as a killer.

Or perhaps it was due to something more irregular.

### *A Certain Passageway*

In a passageway that was not supposed to exist on the official blueprints underneath the backyard. In that passageway there were people fallen on the floor randomly.

They were the guards of the backyard who grasped the knowledge of what goes behind the scenes and even Fudou's subordinates.

“....”

The time goes back to about ten minutes prior.

When Usubara caught Nec who for some reason sat in the seat next to Izaya, she quickly said, “Ah, you're looking for Izaya? If so he's not here anymore. He may have went to the other side.” She then informed him that he was brought to the manager of the stadium.

However, there was something more important than Izaya right now.

Usubara was a poor talker, but when he asked Nec albeit with difficulty if a woman came looking for Izaya at the wheelchair seats:

“Eh? Actually a woman was talking with an official, and I feel she was brought to the back, but.....If she came looking for Izaya, maybe she was taken to the same place as where the executive is?”

So she had said. He left her there and took off.

Usubara then roughly wrenched the door entrance to the personnel passageway, broke the door knob, and stunned the guards who tried to stop

him by dragging them in with him. Usubara headed inside, found the guard who looked like he would know the location to the executive's location and tried to make him talk by threatening him. But en route from there the environment became strange.

At first it was the guards who possessed unique batons, but then they started to bring out taser guns before they brought out the knives and hand guns near the end. It was apparently clear normal stadium security guards would not have these weapons.

As he was losing his cool at the thought that this too was part of Izaya's conspiracy, he also became concerned for his step-mother. It had not even been more than two years since they meet in person, but there was one thing he knew for certain. That his step-mother accepted too much of everything.

She immediately got along with the yakuza from the Futsuku group he was a part of, and she would easily talk with the influential people who opposed him. She had a thoughtlessly observational eye, so she could clearly see through anyone if they were honest or not. But on top of that she could carelessly talk with anyone.

He could not help but think the part of her brain that would register fear was lacking. But on the other hand, he had complicated feelings regarding her since he thought she could call someone like him her son and interact with him like a normal person since that was exactly the way she was.

Usubara thought this as broke the fingers of the man who pulled out a hand gun on him. He broke one at a time, persistently asking the whereabouts of the executive. The man told him at the point when his forth finger broke, but just as he thought to try and break the man's neck, thinking it would be troublesome to let him go only for him to try and use the gun again, the face of his step-mother came to his mind. He decided to let him go and released his grip on the remaining bones of the man's fingers, shoulders, elbows, and wrists. Except that he already lost consciousness when he dislocated his elbow.

Ayumi Usubara.

If someone could look past the standing out parts of his outer appearance in addition to his nonstandard power, he was an excellent destroyer who manage

small tasks such as operating phones or opening doors. Although that one weak point was hardly a major handicap.

“Wha.....!? M-monster!?”

Again one person took notice of him, brought out a knife from his pocket and pointed it at him. He held the knife the same way as a professional killer he crushed at his previous workplace, but for now he made a front kick out of range of the knife.

“Idi-.....Ga.....ha”

The knife pierced at the bottom of his shoe, but it was useless against the specialty safety shoe which had an iron plate at the bottom of it. His broken knife and his arm were caught. He then took a hit from the giant shoe directly into his solar plexus. The pro killer from the third investigation team felt his arm crumble and break under the impact of the blow, and he bounced several times down the passageway before immediately falling silent.

After that Usubara proceeded to walk towards the office room. If Izaya was there, he would crush him right then and there. If his step-mother was there, he would save her at once and then leave this place. The problem was if both Izaya and his step-mother were there. *What should he do?*

While considering his options, the released ‘Adamura’s pet whale’ heavily walked down the passageway.

Without knowing bound on this day he would be given the nickname ‘the blue whale baseball stadium destroyer’ in the underground society.

### *Ryuusei’s Office*

Izaya, receiving the gun, smiled slightly and said to Ryuusei.

“Do you not think I would aim this gun at you?”

“The moment you move your own in my direction you’ll get riddled with bullets. You can try if you have the confidence to shoot faster than the guard’s reflexes, but even if you happen to shoot through the crown of my head, it would not change the fact of you getting rained on by bullets.”

Izaya moved his gaze around the area. When he did he saw the several men

retrieved the gun from their pockets and prepare themselves to fire at any time.

“.....”

A bit of his smile vanished. Izaya turned his focus back over to the blind covered windows.

“Right, I’ll tell you in advance, but it’s pointless to shoot the window to try and alert the spectators to an abnormality. The glass behind the blinds are bullet proof. Only a lead bullet with that gun would smash it.”

“You got me. You seriously want me to shoot Sozoro-san?”

“Sozoro? That’s a unique name. Well it doesn’t matter if he’s Sozoro or Osero. There are amply enough bullets in there. I don’t care how many shots you hit him with, but if any stray bullets come this way you’ll die in the following moment.”

“Telling me to shoot and kill Sozoro-san.....it’s impossible, that sort of thing.”

*Huh*, Ryuusei and Tamae thought while Hiura frowned.

What Hiura took out of Izaya was that he had attitude as though he would not think much of another person’s life. He had doubted this old man would be that important of a person to him.

– But why would he bring him into such a dangerous place?

The question came to Hiura’s mind, but Ryuusei took it as *he found his opponent’s weakness* and looked between the old man and Izaya with a sadistic smile.

“Hahaha! So you too are a child, informant! It seems we can direct an unimaginable tragedy. But don’t worry. What is beyond the overcoming of sadness is the honor of working with me.”

”.....I really have to do it?”

Izaya was slightly covered in a cold sweat. Ryuusei shook his head in answer with his greatest smile.

“Of course. If you can’t, it’ll lead to those kid friends of yours and your young



lady contact dying.”

– A young lady contact?

– Well. I just talked to Nec-chan on the phone.

He was confused, but for right now he did not have to time to decipher that information. Izaya looked over to Sozoro as though seeking for help.

“Izaya-dono, for these old bones you can shoot without concern. For me to have lived so long, I do not have many regrets.”

“Sozoro-san.....don’t say that.”

Izaya was shaking his head in plea, but Sozoro siply nodded with a gentle smile.

“Now then, shoot. You should prioritize the children’s lives rather than this feeble-minded old man.”

*In the Audience*

“Ah. Shoot.”

Nec had been continuing her work on her laptop when raised her voice as though she remembered something.

“I forgot to tell that Izaya that Usubara was also looking for a woman.....Oh well.”

The audience around her stood up and started to sing the Serpent’s rooting song, but having no care for the game Nec resumed typing on her keyboard. Soon after she immediately happened upon certain data asleep in the sea of the net. They were the two names of the victims she was informed about on the call from Izaya.

Takioka and Hiura had finished looking into the matter already

They were the details Takioka and Hiura had already finished looking into and the list of people connected with the baseball stadium. On it Nec discovered the *items* her name originated from. She happily and joyously smiled as she looked through the data.

“Kee hee hee! I found two fresh *bodies*~!”

Her ridiculous sounding whisper was blown away by the large chorus of the song; it did not reach anyone's ears.

### *Ryuusei's Office*

"Hahaha! That's the spirit, old man! Now then, Izaya Orihara! Answer that senile old man's feelings."

"....."

In contract to the exalted Ryuusei, Hiura had frowned.

– Sozoro....?

– Now, I feel like I heard that from somewhere.....

But before he could remember the answer, the situation in the office already began to unravel.

"It can't be helped then."

After letting out a big sigh, Izaya wiped away any expression on his face and said to Sozoro to confirm with him.

"Alright, Sozoro-san. This is because I was threatened and couldn't help it, okay? This isn't a violation to the contract, so I'd like for you to think well on that. After all, it's to save Haruto and Himari."

"I already understand. I will not bear a grudge, so please shoot already."

".....?"

Ryuusei felt something off about their exchange, but then in the next moment Izaya put his finger on the trigger. And then without any hesitation he turned it towards Sozoro and took a shot.

In an instant there was the small sound from the suppressor, and the form of the old man blurred. One moment he thought the old man shook from the impact of the shot, but somehow something was off. When he looked, Izaya was crouched over in his wheelchair while grasping his right hand. And then near the ceiling a some kind of black object was revolving, suspended in mid-air. It looked like it was just making an arc, and the black object started to free fall.

The ones paying attention to Izaya gasping his right hand noticed it. The fact

his right wrist was easily bent downwards.

The ones who focused on the black object noticed it. The fact that that was the gun Izaya held in his right hand until a moment ago.

From those conclusions what they knew was that not only did Sozoro dodge the bullet, he made a counter attack and hit Izaya's hand. The gun flew into the air from the impact, and in the next moment it landed in Sozoro's palm.

That was all it was.

"Wha....."

The people around them were taken aback, creating a slight gap of time, enough so Sozoro positioned the suppressor hand gun in both hands and pulled the trigger several times as he rotated. There were muffled plosive sounds from the suppressor; the ones who were holding guns were hit in succession in their arms and shoulders.

"Gah....." "Gua....."

And with the men's arms now useless and unable to hold their guns, Sozoro slowly pointed the mouth of the gun towards Ryuusei.

".....You.....are.....?"

Not really catching up with the events, he raised his voice in a daze.

"To spare time, you should have left one bullet. Or you should have prepared a full revolver to entertain this hand. If you did that it would have left myself in a quite the predicament when I ran out of bullets."

Sozoro chided Ryuusei's carelessness and arrogance instead of asserting his loss.

"My. I can use weapons, but my foundation is in hand-to-hand combat, so I am not particularly skillful handling firearms. Even so, from this distance I cannot miss."

"Urg.....Ghaa....."

The one who moaned was not Ryuusei with the head of the gun pointing at him. It was from Izaya Orihara, crouched over in his wheelchair.

Sozoro did not lie at all. Izaya could have shot him and he would not hold a grudge; his statement was completely true.

However Izaya came to the natural realization. *That he never said a word about attacking back.*

“.....! .....Ah! That hurts! Sozoro-san! My wrist! My wrist is dislocated, you know!?”

Izaya exclaimed in protest.

“You should be glad for just this much for pointing a gun at me. Besides, I knew it was going to turn out like this because you held the gun in your non-dominant right hand.”

He replied rather fast. Sozoro grasped Izaya’s wrist tightly, waved it up and then pushed back down. The next moment, surprisingly Izaya’s wrist was put back to the way it was. It seemed that the pain did not completely vanish, yet Izaya pasted a smile on his face as he withstood the pain while holding his wrist.

“...Seriously, it was Ryuusei’s fault. Being told to point a gun at the Densuke Sozoro is the same as being told to commit suicide, after all.”

“!”

The one who reacted to that sentence was Hiura.

– Sozoro.....Densuke Sozoro!

“It can’t be.....Densuke the Lion?!”

“Well now, it seemed Adamura-san also knew, but Sozoro-san, it seems you’re quite famous to the older generation.”

After mentioning the name of a wealthy big shot person he was acquainted with through a certain event in the past, Izaya crossed his legs upon his wheelchair. He then spoke with a refreshing smile as though he did not feel the pain from his wrist and back bones.

“Well then, now that I know the pawns here, how about we continue with the business negotiations?”

“You bastard.....after showing such disgraceful behavior you shouldn’t make

that kind of expression.....”

“Really now? I don’t really know what you mean.”

When Izaya and Hiura were conversing, behind the guards who unable to move and the third investigation division guys who were shot in their arms and groaning on the ground there was one shadow moving stealthily.

It was the responsible official of security, Fudou.

While hiding himself behind them, he made a call and spoke with a quiet voice into the radio.

(It’s an emergency. Everyone grab a weapon and come to the office! Also, Mayuzumi, bring one of the people from there! Izaya and that old man are dangerous! Make them a hostage! Alright!)

A gun was turned towards Ryuusei, but now that it was down to this he started to even think he would not care if he, his employer, died. Fudou could not help but want to run away from this nonsensical situation.

### *The Sixth Parlor Room*

“.....”

Hearing Fudou’s orders from the radio, Iroha took a breath.

– Ah, I see.

– The third investigation division and the guards couldn’t do anything against that old man after all.

– .....I don’t think bringing a hostage or two now would really help.

– Well, it’s work.....right?

Quietly, deeply, she set her resolve; to change her mind to *work*. But that renewed work was interrupted. Yuuki called out to her.

“What’s wrong? Iroha-chan. You’re making such a scary face.”

”.....”

Iroha fixed her expression and addressed the three in the room.

“I’ll have one of you come with me.”

“Eh? Where to?”

She answered Haruto’s question straightforwardly.

“To where Izaya Orihara is.”

– I think the person who will follow me will meet a terrible fate.

She cut off without mentioning that. Naturally she could not tell him that she would kill him in the worst case scenario.

“To where Izaya-san is!? Okay, then I’ll.....”

“You can’t, Haruto-kun.”

The one who gently interrupted Haruto was Yuuki.

“Eh?”

“It would be sad if you left Himari-chan here all by herself, right? If you two don’t meet with him together, Izaya-kun would also be worried for her wondering where she is, you see?”

“Ah, I see.....You’re right. I’m sorry, Himari-chan.”

“I.....”

Himari looked over to Yuuki and Iroha with confused eyes.

Yuuki gave her a smile and said as she took the TV remote nearby.

“Look, you can wait here and watch TV, okay? Izaya-kun will surely be here soon.”

She turned on the TV screen and searched through for an appropriate channel. Seeing Haruto take a seat right in front of it, Himari after hesitating for a moment bowed her head deeply towards Yuuki.

“.....Why did you decide to come?”

When they exited out into the passageway, the men on watch were suddenly not there. It was probably because they were summoned by Fudou and were heading to the office.

When Iroha asked that question on their way there, Yuuki laughed aloud and said.

“I really don’t like children dying.”

Iroha’s eyes widened, and she asked.

“Th-then why.....?”

“Well I’ve been mothering Ayumi-chan for two years now.....Even now, I’ve seen a lot of different people come by. I can somehow tell that sort of thing. And that you are the type of person to thoroughly go through with the job.”

“If that’s the case, then this is all the more the reason.....why are you doing it?”

If she chose one of the children, then she would be safe for the mean time. Depending on the circumstances, she would have been able to run away. *If she had realized it was a dangerous situation, then why did she say she would come?*

“Hmmmmmm.....Impulse, I guess. It’s the same as when I got married.”

After Yuuki made a self-ridiculing smile on her childish face, she told Iroha as though to relieve her.

“Besides, no matter what happens to me, you wouldn’t have liked it, right? Hurting children. If you can, haven’t you thought of changing jobs?”

This time Iroha stopped in her tracks. Looking at her with eyes as though she was a spectator that could read her mind, Yuuki continued with a childish laugh.

“Looking at your face and I know, Iroha-chan. What you’re thinking about really shows on your face, you know?”

Iroha thoughtlessly patted her face and gave a wry smile like an evil spirit had fallen.

For a wry smile, it was a smile right from her heart in a long time. While thoroughly reflecting on the fact it was not suitable for a killer.

*Ryuusei’s Office*

“So then...you think you won against me? Izaya Orihara.”

Ryuusei wrung out a deeply resentful voice from his throat towards Izaya, who was patting his red swollen wrist. There were a few meters of distance

from the gun Sozoro is pointing towards him, but even so there was no mistake by seeing his previously demonstrated skills he could easily hit him.

Izaya told the immobile Ryuusei.

“It’s not a victory or defeat. I only came for negotiations.”

“I’d agree if I employed that monstrous old man. And being able to remain dignified in this kind of situation. Then the one who killed Hiura-san’s guard during that blackout really was.....”

“It was not us.”

“.....What?”

Having an answer beyond his expectations Ryuusei was thrown into bewilderment.

“We certainly moved in legitimate self-defense, but we do not do something so cruel as break his neck. Besides, the negotiations with Hiura-san went well, so would there be any reason to kill his subordinate?”

“Hold on.....what do you mean self-defense?”

Izaya plainly answered Hiura’s question.

“We were attacked. In the middle of the blackout.”

Having to supply more Sozoro spoke further on the matter.

“I would say I felt it the moment the power outage happened. He attempted to strangle me, so I hit him in the nether regions and his Adam’s apple then left him there.”

“What do you mean.....?”

Hiura squinted as though he could not comprehend what was said.

“We were also set up. Really, the real culprits are a terrifying bunch.”

“Just what are you.....”

Ryuusei just started to speak up, but then the office phone rang.

“.....”

“Ah, go ahead. I don’t mind you picking that up.”



Izaya prompted. Ryuusei picked up the telephone receiver. Honestly he thought the gun would have been thrust at him or there would have been no one on the phone, but the number on the display being one from a man he could never ignore. Ryuusei took the call.

”.....Hello. Yes. It’s Takioka.”

There was a slight lapse of time in silence, but then Ryuusei frowned.

“Haa.....the TV?”

Hearing that, the curves of Izaya’s mouth lifted into a smile and he whispered “bingo.” But no one caught that.

Not understanding what was going on, Ryuusei changed the switch of the projector, playing the TV footage on the screen in the gap of the room.

And what was being projected was-

*The Sixth Parlor Room*

“Hmm”

Haruto had been changing the channels at random with the remote left it on the desk, tilting his head to the side.

“What’s up with this? All of them doing the same thing is boring!”

“.....A special news program then? But, no, all the screens are really the same.....”

Himari moved her gaze to the *same footage displayed on all channels*, and the moment she confirmed the contents she made an apparent deep frown.

It was not what was in the contents. She confirmed that with the case happening on the TV and their situation right now Izaya Orihara had something to do with it.

*Ryuusei’s Office*

[Informing the Natsugawara group. Informing Byakuyamaru Natsugawara. Informing Ryuusei Takioka.]

[Call off the concessions for the Summer Tile Stadium’s “lighting” and “extras.”]

[For this to not be a threat means it has already been shown to the world.]

Those three sentences kept being displayed on the pure white screen. Between the intervals inexplicable images and geometrical patterns were inserted, and mixed with a noise that sounded like someone whispering it was an unsettling footage wrapped in an uneasy atmosphere just by watching it.

At first he doubted that maybe it could be projected from someone's computer screen, but going through the channels he recognized it was not a sensible phenomenon. Switching the television station and looking at certain stations that televisions anime the same footage is still displayed across the board.

"An electromagnetic wave.....hijack?"

Ryuusei's muscles were twitching in his cheeks. Izaya said to him while looking at his cell phone.

"Yes, right now.....it looks like there's a huge commotion on the net."

"What?"

"It seems a factory of the Natsugawara groups exploded during break. And then apparently there was a bottle filled with poison of some kind left in front of the Natsugawara's commodities. 'Already shown to the world' seems to be referring to these happenings. Really, somehow these incidents should have been kept quiet so it wouldn't come out to the public, but it seems it became a huge incident shaking Japan!"

Izaya talked as though it was other people's affairs. But for each person in the office room: Ryuusei, Tamae, Hiura, the secretary, Fudou, each of the guards, and even the ones who were shot in their arms could not follow the speed of the situation.

Ryuusei had dropped the call and put aside the receiver unconsciously. There were several thoughts that passed through his mind.

– In times like this is it possible for a hijack to occur on each station?

– No, it doesn't matter if it's possible or not. The problem is a hijack actually happened.

- Why
- Who could possibly?

- Actually, a similar case happened in Kyushu a few years back.

– It'll be in the news all over Japan.                      - Why the talk on the “extras?”

– How can I trick them?                      - It's impossible.

– Before the police come I can clean up the evidence. - But they will certainly begin an internal investigation of the Natsugawara.

– Is it the end? - For me?

- Who would do this?
- Are the murders a link to the explosion and poison then?

- But in the first place the letter only said “*hand over the list of patrons and records of dealings*” .....

No matter what question he could think of, he arrived at no answer for any of them. However the confusion for each person in the office room did not end there. Ryuusei's cell phone blared up.

“ ”

• • • • •

Thinking the Natsugawara group headquarters he dropped the call from was calling his cell phone this time he turned his attention to the display screen. And on there was the notification of a sent text along with the name of the sender. A name of a man that should not even be displayed.

“Amagi.....?”

A text from Amagi who was supposed to be dead. As though something possessed him, his thumb slid over the screen and opened the text.

[How dare you, to me]

A short sentence.

Just with that the confusion only increased.

And then as though to not give Ryuusei time to think, Tamae's and the other people's cell phones started going off one after the other. On Ryuusei's cell phone too many continuous texts were coming in. A good half were texts from Amagi, but there was one unknown address. But seeing the sender's name

Nishikino, he confirmed it likely to be the man who was Hiura's bodyguard.

Naturally, Hiura's subordinate was dead. He was currently in the warehouse awaiting disposal, but it was hard to imagine he came back alive and sent a text.

– Then, who's cell phone....

– No.....

While the man Nishikino had yet to be dealt with, Amagi's cell phone had already been taken care of. But on their cell phones the unsettling sentences kept coming from both PCs and cell phones.

[Hearth, hearth, hearth    hearth, hearth]    [It's not me]    [Help me]  
[Tamae]    [Hiura-san is]

[I was betrayed]    [Why me]    [Yo- -tera- -gun- -hata]    [Don- -o]

[Fudou]    [the plane is falling]    [I was tricked]    [Ryuusei Takioka]

[    ]

From the enumeration of meaningless characters, the names of the people, to even the terms speaking ill of something, several words continuously sent through text.

“What the hell is it? These things.”

There was no way the dead could send texts. But for a prank this was peculiar.

Ryuusei, Hiura, and the guards only frowned, but Izaya observing the inside of the room noticed two people here who openly turned a pale color.

“What's wrong? Your complexion doesn't look too well. Tamae-san.”

“.....! It's nothing. I always hated this. This type of horror.”

She attempted to feign calmness, but the tips of her fingers were shaking slightly. However, she did not seem to plan on saying anything more than that and started to type on her tablet.

After Izaya confirmed that he called out to the other person. On top of originally looking weak-spirited, the man currently had his gaze swimming as though his eyeballs were going to fly out.

“You over there also don't look so good; are you alright?”

“N-no....No, no! No!”

Ryuusei changed his focus to the man who yelled out when he was called by Izaya.

“.....Fudou?”

“I-, i-i-it, it wasn't me! I wouldn't....why! I'm not involved! I'm not part of the terrorist explosion.....or poison! Damn! I just found Amagi's body.....shit!”

And then as if he went mad he pointed towards Tamae and yelled.

“Her! It's her! Everything was her! I know! I know it! You and that, Hiura's guard were together! You.....You both were on it!”

Tamae answered Fudou, who was shaking and yelling at her, mixed with sneer as she wiped the sweat from her face.

“What are you saying? Fudou, you're crazy!”

“Shuddup!”

There was a dry sound. What was in Fudou's hand was the same suppressor handgun the third investigation team had.

The bullet missed Tamae's cheek; her hair that was hit fluttered down onto the floor. With that she sunk down onto the floor, her whole body trembling.

“M, mo-.....Move! Move iiiitt! I'm not it! I just, I, the culprit! I only killed the culprit! A terrorist, poison – why did it get this big, dammit! It shouldn't have been anything! Damn you! Damn you, damn you, damn yooooou!”

Shouting incomprehensible things, the man threatened with the gun and backed behind the guards and continued like that and ran for the door's entrance.

At about that time the door opened, two women tried to enter the room.

“Um, I brought a hosta-.....”

“Outta the waaaaay!”

He shouted while flinging the gun around and thrust himself past one of the women in front of the door.

“Eee!?”

The small figured woman was thrown back by Fudou with his great physique, and after hitting her head on the hallway wall she fell unconscious.

Running past them on the side, the pale man ran far away from the room.

“Yuuki-san!”

Watching the girl’s back in the bartender uniform hurry out into the hallway, Izaya tilted his head a little.

– “I brought a hostage” .....she said that, but.

– But who was the person thrown into the hallway? Whose hostage?

But he decided to think on that later for now.

Since right now there were humans welcoming the climax of their lives right in front of him.

“.....”

Not knowing what to do in front of the unusual occurrences and calamities Ryuusei stood stock still dumbfounded. And the alert sound from the succeeding texts now arriving on the computer on the desk started to ring. The senders were from the expected addresses of the dead Amagi and Nishikino. And on there the exchange of Nishikino and someone’s e-mail and SNS was attached.

“.....”

Forgetting that he had a gun being pointed towards him, Ryuusei looked over the attached file, devouring into it.

And then after some time had passed, his haughty attitude completely dissipated. He turned towards his own sister with an expression of that of a demon.

“Tama....e....?”

“.....”

Tamae did not say anything. On her tablet the same file was sent. On her handheld model the remaining proof that was restored from the dregs of the

server in relation to the exchange that should have been erased was displayed.

“Did you.....kill Amagi?”

“.....”

“Tell me! Tamae!”

“.....It wasn't me. The one who did it was Nishikino.”

Hearing that, Hiura's face hardened.

“What does that mean.....? Does that mean the letter was written by Nishikino?”

“Aah, I see.”

Nodding his head in understanding, Izaya interjected.

“Tamae-san here, who was in charge of managing the surveillance cameras, changed a part of the stadium's cameras into still screens. And then the true culprit Nishikino-san helped.....is it?”

Ryuusei hearing that conjecture shook his head in disbelief.

“That can't be....why? The list of patrons and the records of the deals requested on that letter.....Don't you already have them! Yet why was it necessary to make a threat to obtain that!?”

And then Tamae, collapsed on the floor, started to talk with a completely given up expression.

“But.....going ahead and use it and do business, wouldn't that expose our inner conduct?”

“In other words, once the internal documents were leaked by a 'mysterious menace' she would have tried to use it without bringing attention to themselves to make money.....something like that perhaps.”

Izaya said with a light smile. Hiura asked him after opening and closing his mouth several times.

“Wait then. Then you're.....It can't be that with the letter and the murders; you had nothing to do with any of it!?”

“Huh? Did I say I was involved? If I did, I’m sorry. That was a lie. It burns to have thought an informant not getting paid to tell the truth, right?”

Izaya shrugged his shoulders back in his wheelchair, and Hiura stiffened with his mouth wide open at his statement. Seeing his behavior, Tamae pasted a broken smile on her face and glared at Izaya.

“It seemed you were insane. Suddenly appearing and then behaving as though you were the culprits. I thought of inquiring of your true intentions, and so you should have been threatened by Nishikino-san.”

“Then that blackout was.....?”

“I set it up. Nishikino-san was the one with the switch. The truth was he was supposed to kill you near where Fudou-kun was. Haha. Hahaha.”

### *In the Hallway*

– Strange.

– Why is it. Why did it get like this.

Pushing the woman aside and running down the hallway, Fudou’s mind recalled the actions of his past. When the blackout happened he heard the groaning voice from the hallway by chance. Shining the flashlight and peering into the hallway frightfully, he saw someone collapsed on the floor, and he knew that it was the vice governor Hiura’s guard.

Just as he approached thinking of helping him, an odd switch fallen beside the man caught Fudou’s attention. Beside the switch was a cell phone, and both seemed to have fallen out of the same pocket. Whatever happened to him, the man continued to shake in pain. Fudou felt some kind of unsettling sign and looked at the cell phone screen. And there was the sentence ‘Have you dealt with the troublemakers?’ and Fudou’s body shook in shock.

Thinking of the possibility he looked through the text history, and while the history was all deleted at a certain period of time there were fine exchanges of instructions left. Fudou who was the first to find the body knew immediately. That it was the exchange to confirm the process of killing Amagi. And furthermore from the process related to the surveillance cameras he realized these texts were from Tamae.



The culprit was right in front of him. The accomplice was among them.

He was afraid, but at the same time a desire arouse within him. If he finished off this man here, he thought perhaps he could take over the profits. Fudou continued to tell himself in his mind, 'It is revenge for Amagi. It is revenge for Amagi-'

He wrapped his arm around the fainted Nishikino in the darkness. And then feeling the nauseous sensation in his arms he told himself if he stopped here it would be hell before breaking his cervical spine.

After that, he dragged the body to the front of the VIP room nearby, avoiding the public eye.

- After that. After that I meant to only threaten Tamae-san from the shadows.
- Tamae-san was meant to be mine!

The one who killed Nishikino and Amagi should have been handled as the work of the same person as long as the police were not investigating into it. The remaining evidence would have the body disappear, and with his case of Amagi's murder as his alibi no one would question him.

– That's how it should have been! What the hell is this explosion! What the hell is with this electromagnetic hijack!

- Why did it have to become a national level terrorist attack!
- Damn, now that it's like this I have to run!
- I don't know how far I can run from that Ryuusei, but for now—

Just as he was caught in thought, he suddenly could no longer move forward. His feet were moving, but his body had stopped.

"Ah.....eh?"

A moment too slow, Fudou's head was grabbed by someone and realized he was being held with one hand.

"Arghh!? Ah, Ah, Aaah!"

A sharp unpleasant sound was made-but it was not his neck that broke; unfortunately it was the result of being thrown with a terrific force. At that

speed it was a force bounced back with more power to be called a line drive more than a straight ball thrown from the pitcher's mound.

Fudou lost consciousness at that point, but the tragedy could not be allowed to end there.

### *A Few Minutes Prior – In the Hallway*

When Usubara was looking for the executive's room at about that time he saw the form of his step-mother. She was being brought by a girl in bartender clothes, and they were trying to enter a magnificent door.

Usubara, knowing it was the executive's room, pressed onward with quick steps. He finally found her, but her being in good condition was the most important. After that he had to take her outside and beat up Izaya Orihara and Densuke Sozoro in that executive room.

While bearing that sense of duty, Usubara was glad to see his step-mother looked alright. However.

An event happened right in front of him.

“Outta the waaaaay!”

There was an angry shout and something came flying out from the room.

That was the one who had a smile on her face only a moment before: his step-mother. With a small cry, her delicate body was thrown onto the floor. She seemed to have been pushed over by the man coming out. It could be because she was hit in the head, but she remained unmoving, collapsed on the floor.

Usubara forgot the next several minutes from that point on.

### *Ryuusei's Office*

Hands placed onto the desk, his face had turned a pale color like that of a dead person. The messages kept coming up even now on his computer, but now the names of the senders were not just Amagi and Nishikino. Names of freelancers eliminated in the past started to mingle in, and the evidence pointing to *that* asleep in the underground warehouse was included. Honestly it was as though the dead came back from that world and were pushing him into a corner.

“As expected, you cannot cast the dead?”

Izaya spoke to Ryuusei, standing there in the pit of despair.

“Really, you’re so interesting. You truly are an amazing person, Ryuusei Takioka-san. You were close. If we met a little bit sooner and under different circumstances we may have been friends. I would have been glad to be an actor for you. But we ended up meeting differently. The “ordinary coincidence” is truly something to behold. Just a slight detail could entirely change human’s fates.”

“Izaya-dono, I think it would be best to cease this meaningless provocation.”

Sozoro chided, but Izaya continued with his sharp tongue.

“The one who was being directed until now was you yourself, isn’t it?”

“.....!”

“You really are just a puppet. You put strings on yourself and continue to pull them desperately to manipulate a ‘strong you.’ A pitiful, ridiculous puppet.”

“Shut.....up.....”

His voice was shaking, but the strength in Ryuusei’s fingers on the table were tight.

“Right, more than anyone you were closer to being a puppet, but so much more human than anyone else! It’s wonderful! Just looking at you makes my heart race! If this really is a theater I would generously give a standing ovation from the audience seats! It’s amazing! It’s truly, so truly amazing I would give a long round of applause-”

“Shut uuuup!”

Ryuusei took out one more gun from the inside of the desk and tried to point it towards Izaya. No longer caring if he was shot by Sozoro, it was a action of his resolve to die and bring Izaya with. However.

Another puzzling incident occurred for the third time. Although more than puzzling, it should be called fear itself. More so for Izaya Orihara, it was bewilderment and fear at the same time.

After all the pretty sturdy doors were crushed like plywood; a man flying through, breaking the doors. His arms and legs were bent in irregular directions, and his face swelled up with internal bleeding like that of a ranchu goldfish. With his narrow breathing as it was he would not escape death if left without treatment.

From the torn up clothing Ryuusei Takioka could tell this was the man who previously flew out of the run, Fudou.

- .....What?
- Now what's happening?
- Is all of this Izaya Orihara's work too?

He considered and moved his gaze over to Izaya, but he was also looking to the doors with bewildered eyes.

- .....?

When Ryuusei looked to the broken doors Izaya was staring at in the threshold between the hallway and the room stood a monster.

“.....”

That was a giant man.

Underneath the blue hair he stared with monstrous eyes, and around them about half of his face is covered with bandages. From his eyes sanity had all but disappeared, which could be taken as him simply forgetting his sense of self in his rage rather than from drugs.

If someone were to call it a Frankenstein monster, Ryuusei right now would readily believe that. The giant had that much intensity. And with him believing he was in despair for having lost everything, he realized he was shaking in the fear of death.

The monster looked around the inside of the room and focused on the man sitting in the wheelchair. With his eyes burning in anger the monster slowly turned towards Izaya with a mad smile as though he just found his adversary and gave out a roar.

“Izayaa.....Oriharaaaaaa!”

“Ah, this is a bit bad. Sozoro-saan, can you I ask you for a favor?”

“I do not mind, but then there would be no one to keep Takioka-dono with a gun in check. If you end up getting shot and die, I cannot take responsibility.”

Glancing over, Izaya could see Ryuusei reaching to withdraw it. It was likely he already has a gun in his hand.

“Ummm....Ryuusei-san, how about a truce right now? Hiura-san, please say something too.....huh?”

“.....”

Ryuusei was only looking between Izaya and Usubara in silence, so Hiura escaped the room with the secretary in that gap of time. Izaya’s shoulders slumped as though he was stumped, but he shook his head without showing that much fear.

“It can’t be helped, huh. Then I’ll just have to manage on my own.....”

His gaze hardened, and he began to make the preparations to use the various gimmicks equipped in his wheelchair.

“This will be the first time since I got into a wheelchair that I would have to seriously run around.”

Recalling Ikebukuro for only a moment, Izaya smiled with a slight grimace.

“.....I don’t think he’s probably faster than *him* though.”

And in the hallway in front of the office, there was one person who was bewildered. It was Iroha Mayuzumi looking after the unconscious Yuuki.

The time goes back slightly.

Iroha was checking on Yuuki’s condition, but although she certainly lost consciousness, her pupils and breathing were alright. In any case, right now nothing would happen to her.

The moment she gave a sigh in relief thinking that, she met eyes with Fudou passing right by her at great speed, his face swollen.

Fudou had previously pushed past Yuuki and ran away but now came flying by horizontally as half a lump of flesh. And then there was a man that could only

be thought as a monster heavily step into the room following him.

Dazed, Iroha thought perhaps she was dreaming, but-

“Izayaa.....Oriharaaaaaa!”

Hearing the monster’s roar, she returned to herself. It appeared the monster’s target was Izaya Orihara. Then she would be safe for now.

However –

– “That’s right! Izaya-san is amazing!”

Unintentionally, Haruto’s smile came to her mind.

And she imagined.

That at this rate if Izaya Orihara was killed by the monster, the boy Haruto would surely be sad.

And then,

– I don’t want that boy to cry.

She thought that. She ended up thinking of that.

– .....

– Really, I don’t have the qualities of a killer.

Without taking into account the various people she had killed in the past, reflecting on her present self she smiled.

She did not have any other orders after being told to bring a hostage. If she did not have orders-it would not matter if she moved on her own.

So she then stepped into the room. Ahead in her sights was the giant shadow approaching the man in the wheelchair slowly.

– Ah, this isn’t good.

– This big person makes shivers run down my spine.

– His orientation is completely different, but.....he’s about as bad of an opponent to face as that old man.

– ? Why is that old man pointing a gun towards Ryuusei-san?

– He seems stronger barehanded.....oh well.

– But I see, then that huge person is strong too, huh.....

– So he's strong. Contrary to the old man, he is as strong as he appears to be.

She rolled up a part of her bartender clothes and took out two ice picks from underneath the cuffs.

– Well, but after all..... Well.....

And then grasping them with both hands while slowly crouching down she attacked the giant's back with an explosive speed.

“Well.....who cares!”

Without knowing the monstrous giant was the son of the woman, who had brought her to her senses.

*A few minutes later*

“My.....how splendid.”

Watching the scene unfold before his eyes, Sozoro gave rare words of praise.

“If you think about it, of all your guards she was the only one: the one cautious of me from the start.”

In his sight there were the figures of a woman and a massive monster fighting. From Sozoro's standpoint Usubara exceeded the woman in actual strength. She swung the ice picks numerous times, but Usubara nearly dodged the vital blows on instinct. And even when he was hit in other areas besides his vitals they did pierce through the walls of his muscles.

But Usubara was currently not calm; he was in a state where he lost himself completely.

With that one gap, she jumped and jumped and jumped.

Sometimes she used her opponent's body and sometimes she kicked the ceiling like on the floor to accelerate, continuing to toy with the massive form with movements of that of top-notch gymnastics. It was as though they were watching a fairy dancing on the giant's body as a stage. It should be a killing match, but the scene was simply beautiful.

Her name was Iroha Mayuzumi.

She was raised as a killer, but since she received her fake name she was a woman who completely forgot her nature as one. At least an existence like hers was acknowledged by others. But in regards to martial arts perhaps her skills had not declined at all. She was a genius blooming with that talent right now.

Watching that woman bartender fighting the monster in a dance, Izaya felt a bit moved and whispered.

“Right at the very end, you discovered the mistake in your casting, Ryuusei-san.”

“.....”

Ryuusei did not answer.

*Is the scene in front of him reflected in his eyes?*

*Or standing before the abnormal scene happening in front of him, did he realize the entirety of his stage had spilled from his hands and could see it became an empty shell?*

Izaya told Ryuusei as he was watching the battle between the woman and the monster in a daze a final cynical comment with those thoughts in mind.

“If you raised that kid as the main attacker (killer), the results of today.....your fate may have greatly changed.”

At that moment they heard the audience’s cheers from outside.

Maybe Kanshirou Munakata established a big record, or the pitcher kept control and it turned into a game set, or the players he did not know showed great efforts—

Thinking of the many possibilities, Izaya did not try to confirm the results.

For him the various human lives filling this room, the episode happening there, and finally being able to watch the genius deserving to be given a standing ovation was satisfying enough.

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**Translation Notes:**



1. The translation for chinpira is closest to “hoodlum” or “delinquent.” It’s actually a much more specific term. A chinpira is a “small time yakuza.” Basically young start-up yakuza.
2. The term Izaya used in his speech to Ryuusei about his theater was 天地創造 (tenchisouzou), which means creation but as according to creationism. I originally did use the term “creationism” in one line because “creation” by itself is pretty vague, but I changed Izaya’s line to say something close to “the creation of heaven and earth.” So I hope with just that the meaning was much more understood than just “creation.”
3. The electromagnetic hijack was what Izaya requested Enokida to do. The event Ryuusei referred to about a similar event happening in Kyushu was also Enokida’s doing during the events of the first Hakata Tonkotsu Ramens novel, where he broadcasted Yusuke Harada admitting to his crimes.

Illustration provided by Soutenkyuu on Tumblr.

エピソード

優勝セール



## Epilogue: Championship Sale

The electromagnetic hijack case that caused a ruckus throughout Japan was left unsolved in the end. But it appeared everything was settled within the Natsugawara group and in the following weeks had a sudden company reorganization.

At that time, the Takioka siblings were dismissed from the baseball stadium administration. Since they were completely separated from the staff, the articles the dilettantes and Shuukan Last Week started had then gossiped about the possibility if the extras and lighting in the hijack case were connected at all, but the truth of it never became public in the end.

Tamae Takioka transferred somewhere overseas, and after that she immediately went missing. There were rumors that perhaps she was erased even within the Natsugawara group, but since there were eye witness reports from another country it was currently unknown whether she was alive or dead.

Fudou was currently hospitalized; the official statement being he “fell down the stairs during the blackout.”

In short, this case of two dead was completely buried in darkness. Not by the stadium executive Ryuusei Takioka but by the organization with more power, the Natsugawara group. The stadium company’s internal state of affairs had entirely changed. Under the completely new management policies, nevertheless without affecting the baseball players, the Natsugawara Serpents have begun to walk a new path.

And now among the people connected with the case, there was one person who was beginning to walk a new path.

*The Following Day from the Case, Somewhere in Kanto*

“Seriously now! Ayumi-chan! Fighting with a girl again and trying to hurt her!”

“.....”

The giant in the backseat shrunk himself as though to make himself smaller from his step-mother’s anger in the passenger’s seat.

“Um, but I was the one who made the first move, so.....”

The one driving the car was Iroha Mayuzumi.

In the end they did not reach a conclusion to their fight. Yuuki had awoke, stepped into the office room and seeing the large fight yelled out with an unbelievable large voice, “Hey! Ayumi-chan! Stop fighting!” Usubara had returned to himself at her yelling.

“It’s fine. You stopped Ayumi-chan going berserk against Izaya Orihara in the first place, right? So you don’t have anything to apologize for!”

“You think so?”

“Yep! So don’t worry! Until you find your next job I’ll be looking after you! You can even call me mom!”

“Ha, haa.”

While she was being poorly pressured by a woman about the same age as her, Iroha suddenly thought, ‘Actually, I didn’t have a mother....’ As she was feeling a bit solemn, Yuuki brought out a map and said.

“So now then, until we find Izaya Orihara we’ll all be driving together! First, I want to see the Headless Rider in Ikebukuro! And then, the artificial island the Etsusa bridge too!”

Yuuki chattered on cheerfully as she spread open the map.

In the end Izaya disappeared from the scene during the confusion in the area. But saying optimistically that since they had met him once already they would probably meet up with him again, she seemed to have decided to go on adventures once again.

And she brought along Iroha Mayuzumi, who was forced to quit her job. The contract was until she found an official job, but currently Yuuki was paying Iroha for a part time job as their driver.

Looking at the working woman, Usubara fell into self-loathing. Without knowing Iroha acknowledged him as strong as Sozoro, he was crippled with self-hatred for going into a blind rage and attacking a girl again in his state.

“Hey, Ayumi-chan. If you want to be a strong person, you have to be able to control your anger, okay? A famous person long ago said this, right? Have a

strong heart, mind, and body?”

“.....”

While tilting his head wondering if a famous person in the past said that, but fundamentally his step-mother had said it, so Usubara felt more gloomy. But then his step-mother said with a gentle smile to Usubara.

“.....But yesterday you got angry seeing me get hurt.”

“.....?”

“For that, thank you! I’m really happy for that!”

Hearing a straightforward reward, Usubara cast his eyes downward, troubled. While feeling the strange, refreshing sense of defeat in front of his step-mother as always.

Iroha saw that as well and happily smiled in the driver’s seat. It was because she thought she could experience this family like setting. She was surprised when she heard the giant she had been fighting with was Yuuki’s son, but when she thought about it she was not related to her foster-father by blood so she understood these sort of relationships could happen.

Now having been released from Takioka’s theater, there were many paths spread out in front of her. But until she settled on which path to take, Iroha decided to walk with this mother and her child.

And like this the misshapen journey of the three continues; each with strength in their hearts, minds and bodies. As long as there was the shadow of Izaya Orihara ahead.

*A Few Weeks Later, the Natsugawara Stadium*

“Look, look! Izaya-san! Munakata is practicing! He’s throwing the ball!”

“You say some rather normal things as if they are special, don’t you, Haruto-kun.”

“But it’s Munakata! I bet he’s really awesome even when he is eating meals or reading manga! This is so exciting!”

“Thank you for such dynamic speculations. You say some really interesting

things sometimes.”

It was daytime at the Natsugawara Stadium. Currently the baseball players were in the middle of practice, and it was generally open to the public.

In the end Izaya was curious if the player Munakata made a record or not and looked up the results of that day, but the answer was beyond his expectations. Rumors had spread since the notorious electromagnetic hijack and the result of a certain gossip that ‘there was a bomb planted at the Natsugawara stadium’ caused the audience to panic and the game to be suspended, leaving it as a cold game at the scene where Munakata’s fourth consecutive home run in a game took place.

“But even though it wasn’t a continuous home run, since he hit six home runs in a day that is a pretty amazing record.....”

While thinking in his heart it was unfortunate he could not see the faces of the players and spectators the moment the game was suspended, for awhile Izaya went along as though he forgot about baseball. But then today he ended up getting pestered by Haruto, “Before I couldn’t see much, so I want to go to the baseball stadium again!”

For some reason Nec came along, and as she watched Himari attending Haruto far away in the unreserved seats with the insistence that it was more comfortable, she began to talk about the case that happened the other day at this place.

“Kee hee hee. But still, vice governor Hiura is quite excessive. Who knew he was involved with the smuggling of gold and jewels.”

“And then he also said *props*. So smuggling weapons as well.”

That was the secret of the Natsugawara stadium. It was a broker business using large scale deposits of smuggled goods and forbidden products at events in the baseball stadium.

‘Stage design’ were smuggled goods of gold, silver and gems. ‘Props’ were weapons, ‘lighting’ was connected with drugs, and for ‘extras’ it was human trafficking working with an illegal organization. It seemed before the stadium was built similar events occurred, so Takioka had used the interests from then

and the connections of the users at that time to rise in the financial world.

“But for that scoundrel to do those kinds of things behind the scenes and kill countless people without getting arrested and just get let go, the world is quite scary, huh.”

“I think that is true, but I don’t think you or I have the qualifications to say that?”

“That’s true. Hee hee.”

Letting out a twisted laugh, Nec thought up another question and muttered half to herself.

“Actually I wonder what happened to the president Takioka when he got fired. I guess I should look later.”

There was an immediate answer.

“Right now he went to a unique place even within the Natsugawara group.”

It was not from Izaya, but from the mouth of a man sitting next to them in the unreserved seats.

“Well, he’ll no longer stand on the stage nor will he be able to rise up in the underground world either. During this time he might be stabbed to death by someone he angered.”

“Whoa, old man. Who are you?”

When Nec turned around, there was a strange, pretty well looking middle-aged man sitting there. He would be a bit before forty years old probably. He looked youthful, but at the same time the man had a kind of majestic aura to him.

The man slowly stood up and requested a handshake with Izaya Orihara in the wheelchair seat next to him.

“Nice to meet you, Izaya Orihara-kun.”

“Byakuyamaru Natsugawara, nice to meet you.”

*A Certain Isolated Island*

“It’s a theater.....This here is my theater.....Haha, hahaha....”

With a broken smile on his face, Ryuusei Takioka continued talking to himself throughout the day.

There were people around, but no one would enter his *theater*. Since they heard only his voice, sometimes the islanders talk about the man to themselves.

“Hey, that guy, what’s he grumbling about?”

“Right, that guy has always been like that, so don’t worry about it.”

“But having a toy store on an island without any children.”

“Wonder why it’s not going under. No customers go in.”

“That owner probably got into great trouble on the home land and got kicked out.”

In a shop where it was only large enough for one third of a convenience store, the owner said to a cat who wandered into the shop, “I’ll give you a role.”

It was a store titled Natsugawara Toys. In it there were no betrayal or strategy – there was just the only king continuing to immerse himself in an eternal delusion. For him, one could say this place was the perfect theater.

### *The Natsugawara Stadium*

“Really, you’re quite the scoundrel.”

Sitting on the pipe seat for attendants, the head of the Natsugawara group gave a fearless smile towards Izaya.

“In the midst of Takioka trying to obtain the perfect theater and take control of everything, you dragged the case itself right outside the theater. In other words, you dropped even the stage into one simple stage setting.”

“Now then, I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“From bombers to poison experts. It’s a good thing to have a wide range of personal connections, don’t you think?”

“.....”

Izaya did not provide him an answer, so he tossed back sarcastically instead.

“Wouldn’t the scoundrel be you though? You inherited what was left of



Takioka's smuggling system after all. With the intention of making him material worthy of impeachment behind the scenes."

"Using what is convenient is a common belief. For instance, even a mysterious courier or informant."

Izaya asked a question to the laughing Byakuyamaru.

".....Will the business with the lighting and extras continue?"

"No, I think not. Naturally I want to do business my sons and daughter would be proud of me for."

"You think smuggling gold and silver or smuggling weapons is something to be praised for?"

Izaya said cynically, but Byakuyamaru shrugged his shoulders and answered.

"It's cool, isn't it? One way or another."

".....In the end, what are you here for? What could the ruling commander of the Natsugawara group come over here for?"

Thinking he lost to the other man's pace, Izaya asked the question indifferently. Byakuyamaru replied to him in an aloof tone.

"Officially I'm here for sudden stadium inspections. Hearing that you were here though, I wanted to see the man who twisted Takioka around his finger. Depending on the circumstances, I even made preparations to win over your group. I did a lot of research on you and 'Candiru'."

"Is that so? Then have I measured up to your expectations?"

"Right now, I still don't need you."

"That's rather harsh."

Receiving the expected answer, Izaya shrugged his shoulders back, seemingly in relief. Byakuyamaru started to talk of *Izaya Orihara* to him disinterestedly.

"You are unable to give yourself praise from the bottom of your heart. Even if you desired the recognition, it cannot be fulfilled. More than anyone, you do not want to be acknowledged as Izaya Orihara."

"..."

“So instead you give praise to other people. More than others would.”

“Have you come to counsel me?”

Izaya chided in amazement. After Natsugawara replied with a simple ‘that’s right,’ he continued.

“What you really want is not praise for yourself. Isn’t it the same kind of person who can applaud the accomplishments of others the same way and from the same perspective as you?”

Then stopping what he was saying for a moment, he smiled while giving a large sigh.

“Well, there’s no one like that. Not that sort of human.”

“So you came all this way just to harass me?”

“Can I say some disagreeable things? After all, thanks to you the Natsugawara group has taken terrible damage from the decline in stocks.”

“Though I think by driving out the Takioka siblings it would be a great benefit for your company years later?”

“And that is why I’m not charging reparations. Be grateful for that. I will allow it once. How about you return the favor one day.”

The Natsugawara head smiled as he stood up, beginning to straighten out his own chair. Izaya expressed insincerely.

“Well then, let’s meet again, Byakuyamaru Natsugawara-san.”

“Before me, how about you meet up with that old friend of yours in Ikebukuro. I think you should pay a visit to that underground doctor and that lover of his after such a long time.”

“I will see about that. If I have time that is.”

After the storm had passed, Izaya muttered to himself as he leaned his body back against the back of his wheelchair.

“Really now, is that guy a hypocrite or a sly man...? Why is it that such troublesome humans gather around me?”

Natsugawara’s words were understood without being expressly told by

others. And Izaya felt alright with that. There was still no one around him that would raise a roar of applause together with him. And he understood himself that it was because of his lifestyle as Izaya Orihara. Izaya does not even consider being given an acclamation by others.

“Izaya-san! Hurry up! It looks like Munakata is practicing his batting! Let’s watch closer up. They said there is a space for even a wheelchair, Izaya-san!”

“...If you insist. Well then, could you push my chair a bit?”

“Okay~!”

Right now, not just yet.



# Afterword

For those being a first time for this, nice to meet you. For those that have been around awhile, it's been awhile. It's Ryohgo Narita.

Thank you for reading the second edition to the "Izaya Orihara Series."

Eh? This is your first time reading it!? That's no good, but thank you! First I hope you read the Durarara!! series and the previous work "A Sunset with Izaya Orihara".....!

And so this Izaya Orihara series being a spinoff from Durarara!! has received popularity from the previous volume and has thus gotten a second addition to it. For this to become a series is thanks to all of your support from the previous work. Really, thank you so much!

The theme this time is "a heartwarming everyday comedy." To write the scenario "what does Izaya Orihara normally do?" I ended up writing him watching a game at a baseball stadium.

In the previous work "a Sunset~" Izaya stirred up the town at work, but this time I think he ended up being pulled into a murder case on his day off and stirred it up.

.....Normally a murder would not happen in a heartwarming everyday comedy? That thought flew far away somewhere with an out-of-bounds home run.

Naturally Izaya puts other's development on the stage without growing himself, but although this time the characters as key persons to appear next time from here on out, Yuuki Usubara and Iroha Mayuzumi, have made their appearances their pasts with many mysteries in them still may be written next time, or I may not write it unless Izaya shows interest.

After all, this is a series with the theme of writing Izaya's interesting yet provoking life after leaving Ikebukuro, so fundamentally it's a no-plan. Even now writing the conclusion to the book, if only I could show Izaya's friends that have not appeared other than just mentioned by name.

By the way, the Summer Tile Stadium doesn't have any particular model. It is a completely ridiculous stadium I made up by picking from various baseball stadium utilities, so I hope you take note.

Now then for those who have read the fourth volume of Durarara!!SH, about that person that appeared in the last part you may have been confused by the change in mood and may have thought "who are you!?", but it's alright; he's only using a different face publicly and in front of his family. The dad during the day time is a bit different. Which one is the real him, well, I hope you all believe who you all prefer is the real him.....!

Now then, for those who looked on the Dengeki Bunko shelves you may have already noticed, but this month another book is coming out.

That's right, it's Durarara!! x Hakata Tonkotsu Ramens by Chiaki Kizaki-san!

It is Hakata Tonkotsu Ramens a big popular series for Media Works, but the characters that appear in it, in other words good willed killers and avengers based in Hakata, each one have come to Ikebukuro...that sort of story has been written up by Kizaki-san's clever, beautiful stroke of her pen!

It is a story written from each of the Hakata Tokotsu Ramens character's perspective during the events of Durarara!! x4, and it is a collaboration story with Mikado, Shizuo, and the main character of this novel, Izaya Orihara, that are have been reading now. Kizaki-san, thank you very much!

..... Yes, I cannot lose with this.

So next year contrarily I will write it!

The stage will be a few years later, the age of Durarara!! SH.....

Celty and Shinra head to Kyuushuu for work. Mizuchi and everyone go to Kyuushuu for a school trip. The van group head to Hakata for an anime event. Shizuo and Tom head to Hakata for collection a debt..... I decided to write a story with Celty and the others who get pulled into an event that happens there to meet the Hakata Tonkotsu Ramens!

Phew! Incidentally I decided to call the person in charge in the middle of writing this afterword, so Kizaki-san still does not know, phew! (While worried if they say I cannot do it)

Well, if I cannot it will just be an adventure where Celty and the others travel to Kyuushuu without it being a collab, but what will happen you ask, well you will have to wait. Hakata Tonkotsu Rames is the everyday life of the sculptured group for its close characters, so I hope those who like Dura will enjoy reading it!

Lastly, this will be just giving my thanks.

Starting from Papio-san (Wada-san) who had to face with my hell of a schedule worse than the last time and to everyone proofreading in the printing division of AMW, thank you so much for your help.....!

Starting with Aogiri-san who is writing the comic release of Durarara the spin off is based from to everyone completed various media works productions such as the anime and games.

My family who has always taken care of me, friends, and all the authors and illustrators.

And to Suzuhito Yasuda-san who has represented the various characters starting from Izaya with amazing illustrations in the midst of such an unrefined, tight schedule.

And more than anything to everyone who picked up the book that is a continuation from the previous novel and a spinoff for the story Durarara and read up to this afterword.

Thank you very much! I hope you look forward for more hereafter.

“While watching the “caught on camera” series in one go” September, 2016  
Ryohgo Narita

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## **Obscure Story: Japanese Series**

The next day in a certain place in Hakata

The day following the events of the electromagnetic hijack on Honshu. On a sports ground somewhere in Hakata there were people playing grass-lot baseball peacefully, not discussing of others' affairs relating to that case.

They appeared to have finished their game for the day and were managing the field. A man with long limbs and ruffled hair had a rake in hand and started conversing to the blond haired man wearing the same uniform as him.

“Seriously, I tell ya. I’m jealous of that there strength of yours. Granted, although you got a good sense for baseball, that uniform doesn’t look good on you. Dontcha reckon’ you look better in bartender clothes?”

“You think?”

Next a man with a feminine manner of speaking observed the blond male with his index finger pressed to his chin.

“Hmm. I don’t mean to sound cliché, but oddly enough I think you would look your best in bartender clothes.”

“Really.....? Thanks.”

The man seemed a little pleased being praised to wear normal bartender clothes for some reason, but he still tilted his head slightly in question while lifting up the roller with one hand.

“.....What? You can carry that with one hand.....?”

A young man with the facial expression of a serious salary man had a cold sweat upon seeing the man carrying the roller that had to be more than 300 kilograms on his shoulders.

While that conversation was taking place on the field, the young man with his neatly, mushroom cut-like hair pressed his cell phone to his ear. The voice he heard from the receiver was a certain informant who was in danger not even 20 hours ago.

‘Hey there, Black Leg Nameko-kun. Thank you for your help yesterday.’

“What’s up with that name calling? Well either way, I didn’t expect to receive a request for a sudden electromagnetic hijack from you. I don’t really know the meaning behind it, but what’s most important is that you’re satisfied with the outcome. Actually, now thinking about it, I take it that Nec is still alive.”

‘You’re terrible at lying. You should already have a guess on what that was, am I right?’



“If you want to really know then pay for it. Besides, I could care less about the competition of the team I’m not partial to. I may have been a bit interested in it if it was a match between the Serpents and the Hawks yesterday.”

‘You’re a Hawks fan?’

“Take a guess. What do you think?”

‘.....By the way, do you know of Ranzou Hiura? He’s a political rival of that Kazuo Matsuda you could care less about, but if you want to know his weaknesses -‘

Just as the informant was talking the man with the mushroom haircut brought up an entirely different topic to intercept him.

“We have a helper here right now who came from Ikebukuro.”

‘.....Ikebukuro?’

“He came here to collect debt from a guy who didn’t pay up his 5,000,000 yen he owed, but we had him join our team for the day when he finished the job.”

‘Ahh.....If I recall, it was the Hakata Tonkotsu Ramens? That grass-lot baseball one.’

And then he heard the yell of the blond man from a distance. Apparently someone on the opposing team that lost made some sort of reckless remark. While watching their teammates try and stop the blond man from picking up a light motor vehicle, the young man moved his cell phone in that direction so the blond man’s yelling was audible.

“He’s an acquaintance of yours, right? Should I put him on?”

However –

“.....He hung up. He really does hate him.”

For a moment he made a ‘I got you,’ expression, but then the young man took a seat on the bench and continued to watch the riot going on.

And like this the meager exchange with the informant had been completed. However, as long as they continued submitting information, surely they would make contact again from the ripples.

Just like those who had left one city would meet again in another.

*To be Continued?*

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### **Translation Notes:**

“Caught on camera” is the closest translation to what he was watching. The title is actually 監死カメラ (kanshi kamera). The Kanshi is usually written as 監視, which is “surveillance,” thus would normally be read as “surveillance camera.” However the “shi” (視) part was replaced by this “shi” (死), which means death. This 監死 doesn’t exist as a word. But the series he is referring to is: ほんとうに映った！ 監死カメラ. Which sort of literally means “It was really projected! Surveillance (observing death) camera.” It is a horror original video series. It’s just a series that show ghosts or bizarre incidents that were caught on surveillance cameras. Hence I found it more natural to call it “caught on camera” as an English speaker, and because I couldn’t make the play on words work.